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## The Africa command: how the Department of Defense has continued America's ad-hoc foreign policies in Africa through neo-orientalism

Katherine T. Roseman  
*Depaul University*, [nomadicfeet@yahoo.com](mailto:nomadicfeet@yahoo.com)

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The Africa Command: How the Department of Defense has Continued America's ad-hoc  
Foreign Policies in Africa Through Neo-Orientalism

A Thesis  
Presented in  
Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of  
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By:  
Katherine T. Roseman  
Department of International Studies  
College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences  
DePaul University  
Chicago, Illinois

## Abstract

The Africa Command (AFRICOM) was established in October 2008 on the premise of a partnership between the United States Department of Defense (DOD) and African militaries in which shared goals were to be pursued and each side was to learn from the other. However, no African counterparts were consulted during the processes leading up to the establishment of the Command. Notwithstanding the oft-repeated rhetoric of “partnerships” by the Bush Administration, in reality, AFRICOM was created to more effectively implement U.S. foreign policy in Africa, most notably containing terrorism after 9/11. This thesis examines the relationship between the U.S. and Africa and uses Edward Said’s theory of Orientalism as the basis for exploring their relationship in AFRICOM. I argue that DOD has, perhaps unwittingly, used what I call “Neo-Orientalism” to legitimize its actions in Africa through the institution of AFRICOM. This work also examines the unspoken American hegemonic motives for the establishment of AFRICOM and its predicted effects. Ultimately, AFRICOM will not be successful in combatting terrorism on the continent unless it addresses the underlying issues of reforming African governments and building/rebuilding institutions to better serve the interests of the people of this vast continent.

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## List of Acronyms

ACRI	African Crisis Response Initiative
AFRICOM	Africa Command
AGOA	African Growth and Opportunity Act
AOR	Area of Responsibility
AQIM	Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb
CENTCOM	Central Command
CJTF-HOA	Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa
DOD	The (U.S.) Department of Defense
EUCOM	European Command
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NORTHCOM	Northern Command
OEF-HOA	Operation Enduring Freedom-Horn of Africa
OEF-TS	Operation Enduring Freedom-Trans Sahara
PACOM	Pacific Command
PEPFAR	President's Emergency Plan For AIDS Relief
SOUTHCOM	Southern Command

## **Chapter One: Introduction**

The Africa Command (AFRICOM) was strategically created by the Department of Defense (DOD) to more efficiently and expediently implement U.S. foreign policy interests in Africa in the aftermath of 9/11. DOD claims the command was founded on an “equal partnership” focused on increasing stability, peace, security, and economic development in Africa however several factors point to a different agenda at play. The sudden turn towards and concern for Africa, as portrayed by AFRICOM, is incongruent with the history of U.S.-Africa relations. From limited contact with Africa prior to the Cold War to selective engagement during the Cold War, out of U.S. concern for the spread of Communism, followed by increased aid during the Clinton administration, American interests have always been at the forefront of US-Africa relations. The creation of AFRICOM will prove to be no different. AFRICOM was created by the Bush administration as a reaction to the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. Strengthening the U.S. military’s grip on what American strategists labeled “ungovernable spaces” in efforts to squelch future terrorist attacks was most likely of highest concern. By “ungovernable spaces” they meant areas that fall outside of a “weak” or “fragile” nation’s ability to effectively govern or police, even though these territories are within the nation’s borders, which may act as a sanctuary for illegal acts, such as terrorism, by “rogue” actors, such as Al Qaeda or their affiliates. Other reasons for AFRICOM’s creation include securing access to African resources (especially oil), countering China’s growing

influence on the continent and improving of the perception of the U.S military through “soft power”<sup>1</sup>.

This research will explore the evidence for the claims made above in contrast with proponents of AFRICOM. It will address the larger questions of where Africa fits in U.S foreign policy and in international relations. The focus will be placed on AFRICOM and the relationship it has in actuality versus the relationship it is projected to have with Africa. Despite declarations of a balanced and mutually beneficial relationship, AFRICOM’s relationship with Africa is built on what Edward Said termed “Orientalism”. This research will explore how the power relations between the global North and the global South have been and continue to be constructed/reconstructed and accepted as normal and naturally occurring in both locations by using AFRICOM’s relationship with Africa as a contemporary example. This relationship is a contemporary example of the long history of the place of Africa as the “Other” to the Western (or in this case simply American) “Self”. The relationship between AFRICOM and Africa is unique in this history of “Us” versus “Them” insofar as AFRICOM goes to painstaking lengths to demonstrate that it is on the same level as Africa while its actions and indeed the entire premise on which AFRICOM was founded relies on the same binary division that Said exposed in his work Orientalism. The West continues to be in a position of dominance over the rest of the world. No amount of well-written publications or glossy photographs showing groups of smiling American and African military personnel will change who holds the power. Gone are the days of colonialism when the term “civilizing mission” did not ruffle the feathers of the general public in the West. Today, Western

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<sup>1</sup> This term, coined by Joseph S. Nye Jr., refers to a means of shaping the preferences of another through appeal and attraction rather than through force and coercion. Joseph S. Nye Jr. The Future of Power (New York: Public Affairs Books, 2011), 81-109.



governments are obliged to be much more cautious in their speech; however, intentions may be just as sinister. DOD does not need to be an equal partner with Africa; they only need to make it appear that they are. Despite the evolution of terms, it is the same binary division repeating itself; the division of Us versus Them, the Self versus the Other. This basic division continues to exist despite shifts in geopolitical power, mainly due to the discourse's ability to reimagine itself.

By analyzing the nature of power relations between the U.S. and Africa one can better understand how this discourse has again reconstituted itself and has been *unconsciously* used, and certainly never articulated, used as justification for the establishment of AFRICOM. A host of consequences accompany the act of dividing the world into two, opposing categories; as one seizes the position of dominance, the other is doomed to be subordinate. This research does not aim to ask *why* these power dynamics have been and are continually constructed and reconstructed throughout history; rather it is the question of *how* they have been, and are continually, constructed (and reconstructed in the case of AFRICOM) that is of greater concern.

I hypothesize that DOD has taken advantage of the binary division of “Us” and “Them” to legitimize their actions in Africa through AFRICOM despite resistance and opposition from African leaders and elites. The more American officials publicly insist that AFRICOM's actions in Africa will lead to increased partnership, stability, security and economic development for the continent, the less credible they appear to African elites when these outcomes are not achieved. Although the true intentions behind AFRICOM are not and most likely will never be made public, AFRICOM's operations, exercises and missions can be studied. By comparing and contrasting publicized

statements and reports from AFRICOM's Public Affairs Office with news publications and information garnered from Africans (through secondary sources), a clearer picture of the command will emerge. This image of AFRICOM will show a difference between what AFRICOM professes to be doing and what it is *perceived* to be doing by local African elites. Through these examinations, it will emerge that the discourse first put forth in Said's Orientalism continues to exist and has even refashioned itself into a "Neo-Orientalism" specific to this relationship between AFRICOM and Africa.

Although this research is more concerned with *how* DOD has created this command and the representation of "Africa" it has used to fuel its missions on the continent and further reinforce its dominance over the continent, it is important to speculate what is behind DOD's recent turn towards Africa. Probable explanations will be examined; countering and containing terrorism, securing America's access to fixed location resources such as oil, and countering China's growing economic influence in Africa. These speculations will be contrasted with what AFRICOM has publicized as the reasons for the change in U.S.-Africa relations.

In order to complete this analysis, I will first conduct a literature review to situate this specific instance (AFRICOM) of a binary division (U.S. and Africa) in the larger context of the discursive theory of the Self and the Other. Edward Said's work entitled Orientalism will provide the backbone of the theoretical framework. The focus will be placed on the foundation of his theory and how it relates to AFRICOM. In order to gain a more specific and current perspective of Said's binary division, selections from Roxanne Doty's work Imperial Encounters: The Politics of Representation in North-South Relations will be reviewed. After providing more depth to how this power

dynamic has and continues to operate, Joseph Adjaye's work about how locals in Africa view AFRICOM will be examined through his chapter "AFRICOM: A View from Below" contained in the book African Security and the African Command. Adjaye's work provides a much more specific viewpoint of AFRICOM which contributes to putting a human face on the issue of using Orientalism to garner legitimacy.

### **Literature Review**

Edward Said's work presents a detailed and lengthy examination of Orientalism by which he means the perceived superiority cultivated by the West and of the West over the rest of the world. Orientalism helped shape Europe's self-image, it created justification for political undertakings (and continues to as we will see with AFRICOM) such as colonialism, and it created a distorted view of the world outside Europe but most of all it set a precedent that has yet to be overturned. Through Orientalism, this belief of Western superiority has become almost uniformly accepted today. It is not *a* discourse but *the* discourse. Said's work is extremely detailed and rich with examples of the history of Orientalism. His thesis, his explanation of how Orientalism emerged and how it was disseminated will be explored in this section, as they will be of the most help when examining how AFRICOM continues to be an Orientalizing force today.

Said's thesis is that modern Orientalism, in both theory and practice, was formed as a result of a historical "set of structures" which when used by various disciplines became naturalized, contemporized and secularized and acts as a replacement for "Christian supernaturalism".<sup>2</sup> Orientalism emerged from a repeated pattern of

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<sup>2</sup> Edward Said, Orientalism (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 122.

scholarship. By “modern”, Said is referring to scholarship created two hundred years ago. However, the theory and practice of Orientalism today in the form of AFRICOM in Africa has relied on the same methods for acceptance. Modern Orientalism was primarily formed by the production of texts, which produced new ideas and necessitated a new vocabulary. Creating such texts and ideas in turn created a new class of experts (Orientalists) who in turn created a new field of study. Originality was not the goal of these texts and Said points out that repetition was common in Orientalist writings. Orientalism was well established as an academic discipline during the dawn of Europe’s age of imperialism. It is through the creation of an esoteric group, who built their discipline by repeating uninformed observations and “knowledge” created by their predecessors, that Orientalism became what Said termed “a discipline of accumulation”<sup>3</sup>. During the European Age of Imperialism, this accumulation meant quite literally the accumulation of territories and people. The discipline was not simply an area of study but a discipline that gained legitimacy with real world applications and outcomes. Territories previously under European dominion may have gained independence but the invisible accumulation of peoples under Orientalism has not gone away. The effects of Orientalism today are not as easy to see as they were a hundred years ago. Today the West has become hyper-aware and hypersensitive of the need to appear non-discriminatory and multiculturally inclusive. Thus, Orientalism today must rely on the almost uniform, public acceptance its long history of recreating itself has ensured.

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<sup>3</sup> Said, Orientalism 123.

Said outlines four ways that “knowledge” is disconnected from reality in Orientalism: expansion, historical confrontation, sympathy and classification<sup>4</sup>. The geographic expansion of Europe via imperialism made the spreading of European knowledge easier and acted as a legitimizing force for it. The knowledge created by Orientalism was not limited to a specific type. By historical confrontation Said means that the knowledge was pervasive throughout various academic subjects and it created its own history to strengthen itself. One method of doing so was by “flattening” the histories of the Orient; homogenizing history for the purpose of simplification. By simplifying the “Other” in each specific case, the simplifying/flattening of all Others resulted. Said calls this method sympathy. The fourth way Orientalism creates knowledge disconnected from reality is by classification or discursive ordering. This is related to simplifying or flattening the history of the Other but includes an assignment of natural rules and biological “truths”. Without these four elements, Orientalism would not have been the pervasive force it remains today; one that has established itself so well it is rarely questioned. But the creation of Orientalist “knowledge” is only useful if it is spread.

Perhaps the most essential factor contributing to Orientalism’s domination, as a discourse, was the ease with which it was disseminated in the early 1900 through “modern learning”<sup>5</sup>. Public education and the university system in the West permitted Orientalism to percolate through prestigious institutions. The institutions coupled with the publishing industry gave Orientalism an authority it otherwise would not have had. It caused Orientalism to permeate the public imagination as its ideas were repeated throughout one’s education. The pervasiveness of Orientalism created what Said termed

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<sup>4</sup> Said, Orientalism 120.

<sup>5</sup> Said, Orientalism 221.

“latent Orientalism”. The latency of the discourse provided a history of knowledge, which could be mobilized for specific and concrete instances. It created an imaginary perspective that individuals brought with them from school to future professional positions and indeed passed on, knowingly or not, to future generations. It is through this latency of Orientalism that DOD gave itself permission to create AFRICOM and it is a testimony of this discourse’s latent powers that the American public has largely not questioned it.

Roxanne Doty’s work, Imperial Encounters, is concerned with the relationship between and the division of the world into the global North and the global South. In her introduction, Doty examines how the relationship between the North and South has produced specific identities for each region. As was demonstrated by Said in regards to Orientalism, these identities are further reinforced by their repetitive construction and reconstruction over time. When attempts are made “to formulate policy, resolve problems and come to terms with various issues”<sup>6</sup> a reinforcement of these global identities is what actually occurs. Doty is primarily concerned with the representation of the North and the South and how these representations create “truth” and “knowledge”.

We fall back on these representations of “abstract binary oppositions” because it is a common ground that is generally accepted as natural, normal and the way the world has always been and always will be. It is a basis, a jumping off point, which sets the stage for the issue at hand. Despite the acceptance of these oppositions there is nothing imminent or pre-ordained about them. According to Doty, using these divisions is not

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<sup>6</sup> Roxanne Doty, Imperial Encounters (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 2.

even necessarily helpful in the long-term for the North or the South but it is a method for justification and legitimacy.

Dividing the world into binary opposites not only justifies intervention on behalf of the stronger, more dominant party; it yields the notion that a selfless, humanitarian action is occurring. The assumed altruism imbued in this further justifies and legitimizes the action. As we will see, DOD has repeatedly used this assumed altruism to carry out missions through AFRICOM. Dividing the world into two opposing parts implies an asymmetrical relationship. Indeed, the relationship is unequal in terms of power and agency however the more dominant requires the less dominant in order to exist. Without the South there would be no North. As negative characteristics are attributed to the South, the North becomes the opposite: the superior and therefore dominant region. The encounters between the two are asymmetrical but in order for the identities to remain, both parties are necessary. As Doty explains “the representational practices that have constructed one have simultaneously constructed the other”<sup>7</sup> and these representations are reinforced with each encounter of the North and the South of which AFRICOM is no exception.

In the same way that this study will examine how AFRICOM has used the narrative of the Self and the Other to legitimize AFRICOM’s agenda in Africa, Doty is interested in how representations permit certain courses of action that otherwise would not be possible. The concern, in both cases, is not to uncover the actual truth but to examine how the constructed truths make actions possible<sup>8</sup>. The lack of attention representation receives in international relations is partly to blame for the perpetuation of

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<sup>7</sup> Doty, Imperial Encounters 3.

<sup>8</sup> Doty, Imperial Encounters 5.

this narrative and how hegemony is understood. For Doty, these two are inescapably linked and they reinforce each other. Although the circumstances vary, hegemony is the practice of fixing the logic so that one power remains dominant. The instance of AFRICOM is one such example of a practice of hegemony.

Doty outlines six elements (or “nodal points”, as she calls them) of the discourse<sup>9</sup>, which create and reaffirm representations in texts. All six elements are closely linked and act to reinforce and legitimize each other, strengthening the discourse of the Self and the Other. The construction of the Self results directly from these representational practices’ construction of the Other. And the self is reaffirmed/created by the void left in opposition to the Other. All six will prove useful when examining how the literature written by and about AFRICOM claims legitimacy. “Presupposition” is the first element outlined by Doty. It is through *presupposing* history and in turn creating “facts” that the divisions of Self and Other are naturalized and normalized. Related to and created with the help of presupposition is the second element, “classification” or categorizing people based on “natural” differences. This element is very close to the discursive ordering/classification method by which knowledge is divorced from reality in Said’s Orientalism outlined above. Foucault’s notion of “surveillance” is the third element outlined by Doty. This method is employed to create “knowledge” through observing and studying individuals in order to classify them. It is important to note that surveillance implies no direct interaction of the parties but one party observing, in secret or without the other’s full knowledge, another and drawing conclusions. The fourth element is “negation” or the mindset that a place is without a history until the developed

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<sup>9</sup> Doty, Imperial Encounters 10.



world gives it one. Very little is written about Africa's history<sup>10</sup>, for instance, prior to the arrival of Europeans. The situating (or to use Doty's term "positioning") of entities is another method of defining the Self and the Other. It is one's place in relation to another's that gives it meaning and this is thus another method of creating meaning through naturalization. The last nodal point involves two opposite but complementary logics: the "logic of difference" and the "logic of equivalence". The former emphasizes differences in a positive manner so as to "fix" the place they occupy in society. The logic of equivalence, on the other hand, works to "subvert" the positive aspect of differences and causes these identities to be fluid and unstable. All six of these elements will be used as tools to demonstrate how AFRICOM is continuing the discourse of the Self and the Other.

On the surface and by the publications produced by AFRICOM's Office of Public Affairs, AFRICOM appears to be founded with good intentions to impart knowledge from the U.S military to African militaries and with the help of other departments of the U.S. government to respond to crisis, promote security and stability on the continent. Joseph Adjaye's chapter in African Security and the African Command questions the real motivations behind AFRICOM by examining local peoples' perceptions of and reactions to AFRICOM. He argues that distrust and scrutiny are justified on the part of Africans given the sudden change in U.S. foreign policy to Africa. Adjaye argues that DOD's true motivation for forging new ties with Africa derives from to a desire to control the continent's oil and as a method of counteracting China and the economic relationship it has already forged with several African countries in an increasingly diffused post-Cold

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<sup>10</sup> With the exception of Egypt which has often been historically and scholastically disassociated from the rest of the continent. Indeed, it is the one country in Africa that is not included in AFRICOM.

War international order. He argues that AFRICOM has had little positive impact on Africa so far and recommends different approaches to improving security on the continent.

Prior to the Cold War, the U.S. government's involvement in Africa was extremely limited. For the most part, the continent was ignored; a specific foreign policy was not created for the continent. The Cold War increased the United States' focus on Africa out of fear that the continent, or several countries at least, would turn to communism. Adjaye describes this period of U.S.-African relations as one of "selective engagement"<sup>11</sup> in which the U.S. only engaged with specific African countries when there was a perceived geostrategic benefit. A number of economic initiatives were made during the Clinton and Bush administrations yet they did little to improve the lives of Africans. The United States was forced to reexamine its military and foreign policies after September 11, 2001. When Africa was identified as a potential breeding ground for global terrorism, the U.S. government saw it necessary to amend their foreign policy and responded by creating AFRICOM.

African leaders, from the beginning, met AFRICOM with skepticism and mistrust. Adjaye groups their reactions into three major points of contention: fear of militarization, exploitation of Africa's oil resources and counteracting Chinese penetration.<sup>12</sup> Although the United States only has one permanent base in Africa (Camp Lemonnier, established in Djibouti prior to the creation of AFRICOM), it has several "Base Access Agreements" with African countries where DOD planes and personnel can access local bases as needed. Adjaye also points out that U.S. aircraft carriers are

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<sup>11</sup> Joseph Adjaye et al., African Security and the African Command (Sterling: Kumarian Press, 2011), 77.

<sup>12</sup> Adjaye et al., African Security 79.

essentially mobile bases that carry thousands of military personnel and equipment. The fear that AFRICOM was created to control Africa's oil is plausible, especially in light of the fact that Africa was estimated to provide 15% of America's oil at the time that AFRICOM was created. China has increased its economic relationship with Africa and gained favor on the continent by alleviating debts owed by African countries. The U.S. government has long feared the rise of China over the U.S. leading some to believe that another of AFRICOM's goals is to establish a presence on the continent to counteract China's influence.

It is not out of the ordinary for distrust and uneasiness to arise between countries when new changes are made to foreign policy overnight. In the case of DOD/AFRICOM and the various countries in Africa, there is an even longer list of reasons why this distrust and uneasiness may arise and is justifiable. Among the many reasons, the most evident is the colonial legacy. From slavery to unfair loan practices, the long history of the West involving itself in Africa is not one of altruism and philanthropy but of exploitation. Why would AFRICOM be any different?

The most fundamental reason why AFRICOM, justifiably, brings up concerns for African leaders is the lack of foresight put into the command prior to its implementation. There was very little consultation with African heads of state, local leaders and Africans in general. The mission outlined by DOD, that AFRICOM would increase peace, security, democracy, development, and economic growth on the continent, were too far-reaching and did not make sense for a military command to oversee<sup>13</sup>. If African leaders had been consulted, DOD would be aware that terrorism is not a primary day-to-day

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<sup>13</sup> Adjaye et al, African Security 83.

concern for the average African. The underlying causes of instability such as hunger, violence, unemployment, poverty and disease are of much greater concern and should be addressed first in order to abolish the conditions that may lead to terrorism. Adjaye further questions whether instability in Africa actually poses a threat to the U.S. and if there is any political justification for the creation of AFRICOM.

Despite the lack of acceptance of AFRICOM and the questions raised about what it is AFRICOM is actually doing on the continent, it was implemented as a military command and continues to operate on the continent, in part, because of latent Orientalism. As will be demonstrated in the following chapter, this discourse provided justification for the West to colonize Africa and it continues to provide legitimacy for AFRICOM. Adjaye concludes with recommendations for the future of U.S.-African relations. According to Adjaye, the reform of militaries in Africa is not a priority for the continent to become more stable. He recommends further cancelling debt, building sustainable communities and implementing fair trade policies, as these policies would contribute more to the stability of these countries. Adjaye's skepticism is further demonstrated by his belief that it makes little sense for a new military command to announce it will increase development in Africa when there are other U.S. government agencies (such as USAID) that have a history of working on the continent and have programs already underway. AFRICOM has very little relevance for Africans in their daily lives and does little to ameliorate their day-to-day security concerns.

### **Research Approach and Methodology**

This research will use Said's theory of Orientalism as the basis for examining how geographical spaces are created unequally and how these divisions remain in place throughout time though their locations shift. The history of U.S.-Africa relations will be examined and DOD's current relationship with Africa will be scrutinized as a new form of Orientalism emerges. Publications from AFRICOM's Public Affairs Office will be compared and contrasted with news publications and published remarks made by scholars of Africa, African leaders and those affected by AFRICOM's exercises, operations, and missions.

### **Importance of the Study**

The issue of the Self and the Other is often overlooked by international relations/international studies scholarship and yet it is the underlying point which defines relationships between global actors. Discussions of how representations of the North and the South have shaped and continue to shape global relations must be had, as they are the fundamental building blocks of international relations. If flaws in the logic of these "naturally" occurring divisions can be exposed what other questions will arise? By examining how the Self and the Other were constructed, the door to a reexamination of international relations will be opened.

## **Chapter Two: U.S.-Africa Relations: From the Pre-Cold War Era to the Post-9/11**

### **Creation of AFRICOM**

The United States government's relationship with the continent of Africa has never been of primary political concern. Throughout history, the U.S. Government has paid less attention to the continent of Africa than any other continent. The United States has only become involved in the continent's affairs when there was little other option either for political or humanitarian reasons. The amount of involvement has varied over time with one thread remaining constant: a lack of adequate planning and little to no consultation with African leaders. Hastily made foreign policy decisions have resulted in ad hoc solutions with little to no long-term results. As will be demonstrated, Africa has been neglected, ignored and largely treated as a foreign policy afterthought by the United States. This was first demonstrated by the United States' hands-off approach during the slave trade and the Berlin Conference and again through policies of selective engagement and curtailing the spread of communism during the Cold War. After the Cold War, humanitarian aid and intervention replaced aid for geopolitical reasons on the continent. The U.S. Government turned towards a more hands-on approach to the continent after the "Black Hawk Down" incident and the attacks on U.S. embassies in Tanzania and Kenya by creating the African Crisis Response Initiative to minimize direct U.S. involvement in Africa while still mitigating security threats at home. The 9/11 attacks reaffirmed Africa as a place of concern for American security. President George W. Bush's increased attention to the continent in the form of debt relief and funding for AIDS was purely out of concern for U.S. security. The creation of AFRICOM followed and appeared to finally be an organized and comprehensive foreign policy for Africa. Yet the fact that no

African leaders were consulted during the conceptualization of AFRICOM, the lack of attainable goals and lack of concrete strategic plans make AFRICOM another example of business as usual in U.S.-Africa relations.

### **The Pre-Cold War Era**

Africa was not a significant concern of U.S. foreign policy from the founding of the thirteen U.S. colonies through the years leading up to the Cold War. Despite the thousands of African slaves whose lives contributed to the rise of the United States as a nation, America's attitude towards Africa was largely one of indifference. The United States did not gain superpower status until after World War II at which point European colonialism was already deeply entrenched on the continent. Despite the myriad of changes in both Africa and the United States during the pre-Cold War period, there was minimal, official contact between the U.S. and Africa during this period.

The first regular contact between the U.S. and Africa was in the form of the slave trade. The practice of capturing and transporting slaves to North and South America began long before the United States was established as an independent nation. However, the period between 1798-1808 was the decade in which the largest numbers of African slaves were brought to the United States<sup>1</sup>. Although the slave trade was banned in the U.S. in 1808, the ban was largely unenforced until an 1820 law passed by Congress equated it with piracy and made the trade punishable by death<sup>2</sup>. At this time, the U.S. Navy patrolled Africa's coast (as did the British Navy) but many slave ships evaded

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<sup>1</sup> United States Africa Command Public Affairs. "Fact Sheet: U.S.-Africa Relations Chronology." [Africom.mil](http://www.africom.mil). 26 September 2008 <<http://www.africom.mil/newsroom/article/6108/fact-sheet-us-africa-relations-chronology>> (22 March 2015).

<sup>2</sup> United States Africa Command Public Affairs. "Fact Sheet: U.S.-Africa Relations Chronology."

capture and the trade continued until 1865 when it was abolished in the U.S. by the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the Constitution<sup>3</sup>. In 1822 freeborn descendants of African slaves founded Liberia with the help of the American Colonization Society<sup>4</sup>. Despite this relationship the U.S. never treated Liberia like an official colony. Indeed, U.S. policies towards Africa during this period can be summed up as “hands-off”; of greater concern to the U.S. was its own domestic policy challenges<sup>5</sup>. Additionally, there was no need for the U.S. government to form an Africa policy at this juncture. The continent supplied much needed labor and direct, official contact was only made when the slave trade was deemed illegal.

During the hundred or so years in between the slave trade and the Berlin Conference there was little indication anywhere that Africa would be colonized. African indigenous political parties were organizing once again along religious and geographic lines and it appeared nation states would emerge from such empires. Indeed, many Europeans doubted, at least publicly, the benefits of colonization vis-à-vis the costs<sup>6</sup>. European powers began to stake their claims on areas of the continent all the same. The Berlin Conference of 1884-1885 set ground rules for future acquisition of colonies by European nations. The United States sent one representative to the Conference (who acted primarily as an observer) and did not directly colonize any territory in Africa with the exception of founding Liberia more than 150 year earlier<sup>7</sup>. Liberia may have been a

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<sup>3</sup> Copson, Raymond W. “Africa Backgrounder: History, U.S. Policy, Principal Congressional Actions.” CRS Report for Congress 5 January 2001. <<http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/crs/rl30029.pdf>> (16 March 2015).

<sup>4</sup> United States Africa Command Public Affairs. “Fact Sheet: U.S.-Africa Relations Chronology.”

<sup>5</sup> Rothchild, Donald and Edmond J. Keller, eds. Africa-US Relations: Strategic Encounters (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers Inc, 2006), 3.

<sup>6</sup> Copson, “Africa Backgrounder.”

<sup>7</sup> United States Africa Command Public Affairs. “Fact Sheet: U.S.-Africa Relations Chronology.”



U.S. colony in name but this relationship was far from the colonialism exercised by Europeans in Africa. Additionally, Liberia declared its independence in 1847<sup>8</sup>, much earlier than European colonies. The United States was not yet the superpower it would emerge to be after the World Wars and the prospect of colonies were neither enticing nor feasible. The U.S. continued this hands-off approach at the Berlin Conference. No Africans were invited to the discussion that would change the continent forever.

The end of European colonialism became evident during the Second World War. The Atlantic Charter of 1941, signed by Winston Churchill and Franklin Delano Roosevelt, declared that all peoples had the right to choose the form of government under which they would live. This charter, coupled with The United Nations Charter signed at the end of the war obligating European powers to develop self-government in the colonies in addition to Europe's weakened state after the war laid the foundation for independence<sup>9</sup>. India's independence in 1947 and an increasing number of rebellions in Africa led to the majority of African colonies being granted independence in the years surrounding 1960. It is during this period that the United States began to engage with the continent, albeit in a sporadic, uneven and selective manner.

### **The Cold War**

At the conclusion of World War II there was no region of the world in which the U.S. had less concerns and commitments than Africa. Previously, the responsibility of the European powers, Africa, at this juncture, was a new continent in terms of U.S. foreign affairs and diplomacy. In 1958 the Bureau of African Affairs was created by the

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<sup>8</sup> Copson, "Africa Backgrounder."

<sup>9</sup> Copson, "Africa Backgrounder."

State Department marking the beginning of a formal U.S. policy towards Africa. This era in U.S. foreign relations, however, proved to be a period of selective engagement towards the continent in which the U.S. only engaged with the countries where U.S. national interests were at stake. Indeed, U.S. policy shifted with each changing estimate of Soviet power. The main goal of U.S. foreign policy in Africa at this time was the curtailment of communism.

As African nations gained independence they were opened up to possibility of choosing their own form of government. At the time, the two primary forms of government were the Western democratic model and the Soviet model of communism. Both sides viewed gaining Africa as a potential method towards global domination and the success of their form of government. In 1957, U.S. President Eisenhower and his Vice President Nixon traveled around Africa for three weeks to determine if the United States should be more attentive to the continent amidst the growing divisions between East and West<sup>10</sup>. In response to this trip, the Bureau of African Affairs was created to address Africa's potential vulnerability to communism. Thus began the period of U.S. foreign policy of selective engagement with Africa. Countries that were feared to be falling to communism and which were important enough to merit attention, received it. As expressed in a Foreign Affairs article from 1962, "from a military standpoint the United States appears to attach no great importance to Africa save, of course, in terms of the negative considerations that in the Cold War era no piece of real estate can be lightly allowed to drift into the hands of the enemy<sup>11</sup>."

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<sup>10</sup> Rothchild and Keller, Africa-US Relations 3.

<sup>11</sup> Emerson, Rupert. "American Policy in Africa." Foreign Affairs January 1962.

President Kennedy increased U.S. involvement in Africa out of the same geopolitical concerns that motivated his predecessor. During his administration aid to the continent was increased from \$100 million to \$519 million but this interest in Africa faded just as quickly when U.S. officials acknowledged that the threat of communism in Africa had been exaggerated<sup>12</sup>. The continent's ties to West proved to be stronger than what the East offered and American interest in Africa decreased accordingly. Specific projects were supported/funded (notably in Zaire, Ghana and southern Africa) during subsequent administrations however the United States' fears of just a decade earlier were clearly no more as the Nixon administration used Africa as an example of communisms lack of appeal to new nations<sup>13</sup>.

This disengagement lasted until the 1970s when violence engulfed southern Africa during the Angolan Civil War, a colony of Portugal at the time. The United States inserted itself in the conflict by backing the two parties in opposition to the Marxist party out of fear that failure to do so could lead to communism spreading elsewhere in the region on the continent through the domino effect<sup>14</sup>. The U.S. was only concerned about the outcome of the conflict because the opposing party was supported by the Soviet Union not out of concern for Angola or its people. Kissinger explained that U.S. involvement in Angola's domestic affairs was critical as it communicated to American allies that the U.S. is willing to oppose the Soviets all over the world. Failure to do so,

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<sup>12</sup> Clough, Michael. Free at Last? U.S. Policy Toward Africa and The End of The Cold War (New York: The Council on Foreign Relations, 1992), 7.

<sup>13</sup> Clough, Free at Last? 8-9.

Vaughan, Olufemi. "The Politics of Global Marginalization," Journal of Asian and African Studies 29 (1994): 188

<sup>14</sup> Clough, Free at Last? 9-10.

Kissinger proclaimed, would cause an expansion of communism the world over<sup>15</sup>. Not surprisingly, U.S. aid to Africa was increased during this period and continued to increase through the mid-1980s and during President Reagan's policy of "constructive engagement"<sup>16</sup>. This aid also followed the path of selective engagement; the U.S. awarded aid based solely on a country's political affiliation. Despite U.S. backing in Angola, the Marxist party prevailed, ensuring U.S.-Soviet squabbles over Africa for the immediate future.

Jimmy Carter's administration appeared to pay more attention to human rights abuses on the continent than any prior U.S. president however these concerns also carried geopolitical motives. He encouraged independence for one of Africa's last colonies, Namibia, and was deeply critical of the apartheid regime in South Africa<sup>17</sup>. As the first U.S. president to visit Africa in an official capacity, he clearly put more of an emphasis on the continent than previous administrations. Under President Carter, fear of Soviet advancement in Africa grew, primarily in East Africa, as Cuban troops were sent to Somalia and increased their number in Angola. At the same time, the "Carter doctrine" devoted U.S. troops and resources to ward off Soviet interest in the Persian Gulf, increasing the importance of Kenya, Sudan and Somalia as staging grounds for U.S. troops and supplies<sup>18</sup>. Clearly geopolitical concerns were the driving force for the increased attention to specific African regions and the aid they were awarded.

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<sup>15</sup> Clough, Free at Last? 10.

<sup>16</sup> Rothchild and Keller, Africa-US Relations 4.

<sup>17</sup> Copson, "Africa Background.".

<sup>18</sup> Clough, Free at Last? 11.

According to Vaughan, opposition to communism influenced U.S. foreign policy towards Africa to the greatest extent during the presidency of Ronald Reagan<sup>19</sup>.

Reagan's policy of "constructive engagement" towards the apartheid regime in South Africa did little to entice the South Africa government to abolish apartheid and in essence endorsed their actions in southern Africa. Despite public opposition to apartheid and the United Nations advocating a policy of isolation in the form of sanctions against South Africa, the Reagan administration's policies acted to encourage the abolition of apartheid by means of incentives without regard for international law. This policy effectively extended the length of apartheid in South Africa and further destabilization in the region<sup>20</sup>. It was not until The Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act was passed in 1986 that the U.S. began imposing sanctions on South Africa demanding the release of Nelson Mandela from prison and the end of the apartheid regime<sup>21</sup>.

The Cold War ended in Africa, according to Clough, on December 22, 1988 when Cuban troops were withdrawn from Angola and Namibia was granted independence<sup>22</sup>. A mutual acknowledgement was made that neither the East nor the West would gain from further conflict in Africa. The end of the Cold War in Africa and the Cold War globally a few years later also signaled the end of American interests in engaging in African conflicts. Aid to the continent decreased as the threat of communism spreading in Africa and subsequently across the globe ended. One of the main physical remnants of the Cold War in Africa is the large number of arms, which were supplied to the continent by both the East and the West. The majority of armaments were supplied by the Soviet Union to

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<sup>19</sup> Vaughan, "The Politics", 188.

<sup>20</sup> Vaughan, "The Politics", 189.

<sup>21</sup> United States Africa Command Public Affairs. "Fact Sheet: U.S.-Africa Relations Chronology."

<sup>22</sup> Clough, Free at Last? 12.

their allies, while the U.S. focused more on distributing aid to allied nations. These arms remained in Africa and were used in subsequent conflicts while economic aid was greatly reduced. The competition over Africa during the Cold War tended to strengthen anti-democratic and corrupt governments with both arms and/or aid as their foreign policy positions were rewarded rather than for their leaders' effective political management and development of the country. These vestiges of the Cold War have remained long after U.S. and Soviet interest in the continent waned.

### **Post Cold War: The Clinton Administration to The Bush Era and 9/11**

Although the Cold War had overall negative effects in Africa, it did provide African countries with a political bargaining chip in the global system. As the Cold War came to a close, the United States focused on Eastern European countries putting Africa, again, on the backburner. U.S. financial aid to Africa dropped after the December 1988 peace treaty while aid was increased to Eastern Europe for economic restructuring<sup>23</sup>. George H.W. Bush's approach to Africa has been called one of "selective disengagement" as he largely ignored the continent except for sending U.S. troops to Somalia in 1992 in response to the drought and famine<sup>24</sup>. The Clinton Administration formulated new programs and institutions, which will be expanded upon below, that regarded Africa on a larger scale rather than responding to situations on the continent in a case-by-case basis. Clinton's initiatives increased U.S. engagement with Africa by both expanding and diversifying. However this led to increased difficulty in executing and sustaining such policies. The interactions with Africa for which George W. Bush will be

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<sup>23</sup> Vaughan, "The Politics", 193.

<sup>24</sup> Rothchild and Keller, Africa-US Relations 5.

remembered the most are the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) and the creation of AFRICOM.

Prior to the Clinton administration, the U.S. did not have a long-term policy towards Africa. Intervention by the United States was ad hoc and, especially during the Cold War, in reaction to perceived threats on the continent. Clinton's first major encounter with Africa after becoming president was the murder of 18 U.S. troops in Mogadishu in October 1993<sup>25</sup>. This tragedy, now immortalized in U.S. imagination through the movie "Black Hawk Down", resulted in him withdrawing all U.S. troops from Somalia. Disengagement with the continent was the immediate response as there were no apparent benefits to becoming entangled in far-away conflicts that had little to no strategic interest for the United States. Following this logic, the U.S. did not become involved in the genocide in Rwanda though Clinton and his advisers were well aware of the systematic slaughter of Tutsis<sup>26</sup>. Both of these events led the Clinton administration to realize that without a proactive African policy in place, the U.S. would continue to become embroiled in international crises with the continent. In response, the African Crisis Response Initiative (ACRI) was created in order to "build African capacity for peacekeeping with U.S. assistance<sup>27</sup>". This initiative laid the foundation for the creation of AFRICOM by Clinton's successor.

The ACRI was launched in 1997 as a solution to reducing the costs, monetarily and in American lives, of intervention by the U.S in Africa. Most importantly, it lessened the pressure on the United States to intervene directly in Africa. The ACRI was a

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<sup>25</sup> United States Africa Command Public Affairs. "Fact Sheet: U.S.-Africa Relations Chronology."

<sup>26</sup> Carroll, Rory. "US Chose to Ignore Rwandan Genocide." *The Guardian*. 31 March 2004. <<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2004/mar/31/usa.rwanda>> (16 April 2015).

<sup>27</sup> Rothchild and Keller, *Africa-US Relations* 5.

training initiative managed by the State Department and carried out by the Department of Defense with the goals of increasing peacekeeping and enabling African responses to African humanitarian concerns at the forefront<sup>28</sup>. It espoused what would become an unofficial slogan of AFRICOM, “African solutions to African problems”. Indeed ACRI was the precursor to AFRICOM in many ways. Just as it is with AFRICOM, the emphasis of ACRI was on DOD facilitated training to African forces with no plans for a U.S. permanent force on the continent<sup>29</sup>. The U.S. provided equipment, uniforms and communication tools in efforts to create quickly deployable African troops to respond to regional crises, much the same as AFRICOM’s mission. ACRI was touted as the U.S. offering guidance to African military forces however the selection criteria for eligible countries required previous participation in peacekeeping initiatives<sup>30</sup>. Thus the countries’ that would have most greatly benefited from the program were excluded. In reality, America’s national interests selected which countries participated.

Clinton’s other initiatives on the continent were less controversial. The African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) introduced in 1999 increased African exports to the U.S.<sup>31</sup>. This measure, in effect, was aimed at integrating Africa into the global economy. Clinton’s administration also promoted democracy, augmented human rights as an issue, and worked to decrease African debt<sup>32</sup>. Clinton’s legacy in Africa is a positive one thanks to his increased attention to the continent and his implementation of a proactive Africa policy. This would prove a tough act to follow.

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<sup>28</sup> Globalsecurity.org. “African Crisis Response Initiative.” [Globalsecurity.org](http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/ops/acri.htm). <<http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/ops/acri.htm>> (16 April 2015).

<sup>29</sup> Omach, Paul. “The African Crisis Response Initiative: Domestic Politics and Convergence of National Interests.” *African Affairs* (394), 2000: 88.

<sup>30</sup> Omach, “The African Crisis”, 89.

<sup>31</sup> United States Africa Command Public Affairs. “Fact Sheet: U.S.-Africa Relations Chronology.”

<sup>32</sup> Rothchild and Keller, *Africa-US Relations* 6.



When George W. Bush was elected president, his administration did not have a solid African policy. Indeed, on the campaign trail Bush stated that though “Africa may be important, it doesn’t fit into national security interest, as I can see them<sup>33</sup>”. Campaigning on a foreign policy platform of realism, it was expected that Bush would carry on with the policies and strategies implemented by the Clinton administration. Although, according to his autobiography, Decision Points, Bush had decided Africa would be “a serious part” of his foreign policy when he began considering running for president,<sup>34</sup> his campaigning did not reflect it. This indifference quickly changed after the events of 9/11. The acknowledgement of Africa as a place of strategic interest and concern in U.S. foreign policy, that resulted from the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington, broadened U.S. engagement with the continent. This turn toward Africa has not been without criticism and resistance especially towards the creation of AFRICOM.

Concerns about Africa as a breeding ground and safe haven for terrorists, most notably al Qaeda, circulated in U.S. foreign policy circles immediately following 9/11. Africa was seen as an ideal environment for terrorism to take hold with its large amount of ungoverned spaces, poverty, penetrable borders and large number of underemployed or unemployed young men. This environment coupled with the substantial number of African Muslims raised urgent concern with the Bush administration especially in the Horn of Africa, parts of West Africa and the Sahel region<sup>35</sup>. The Global War on Terror was quickly launched after 9/11. Two fronts of this war were in Africa: Operation

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<sup>33</sup> Daniels, Christopher. “United States Military Power Towards Africa.” Mosaic African Studies E-Journal. Winter 2010. <[http://www.coas.howard.edu/africanstudies/mosaic/index\\_34\\_3922998599.pdf](http://www.coas.howard.edu/africanstudies/mosaic/index_34_3922998599.pdf)> (3 June 2011). 2-3.

<sup>34</sup> Bush, George W. Decision Points (New York: Crown Publishers, 2010), 334-335.

<sup>35</sup> Cooke, Jennifer G. and J. Stephen Morrison. Africa Policy in the Clinton Years: Critical Choices for the Bush Administration (Washington D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2001), 14-15.

Enduring Freedom Trans Sahara (OEF-TS) and Operation Enduring Freedom Horn of Africa (OEF-HOA)<sup>36</sup>. The latter of which operated out of Djibouti at Camp Lemonnier, a former French military base, which became the first permanent U.S. military base in Africa in 2003<sup>37</sup>. The goal of both operations was to prevent the spread of extremism on the continent. This vague mission and lack of clearly defined goals resulted in a costly venture for the Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA) operating out of Camp Lemonnier. CJTF-HOA did not fulfill its original mission as terrorist targets could not be identified and instead gathered intelligence and hosted training exercises working with other U.S. agencies<sup>38</sup>. Although this operation did not fulfill its mission it provided a valuable example of American military and civilian coordination and cooperation. It was based on this example that AFRICOM would be founded.

Through Bush's PEPFAR program it would appear that the increased attention towards Africa was not only about the global war on terror but also out of concern for the AIDS pandemic that affected Africa the most. By his own admission, President Bush advocated for an increase in AIDS funding in Africa out of concern that a generation of children orphaned by AIDS would lead to easily recruited extremists. He believed that increasing the health of a society in Africa would serve American interests because "healthier societies would be less likely to breed terror or genocide"<sup>39</sup>. Bush acknowledged that his critics claimed PEPFAR was created to divert attention from the war in Iraq or out of a moral obligation to appease and increase his supporters on the religious right. Regardless of the potentially multi-faceted reasons for PEPFAR's

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<sup>36</sup> Daniels, "United States Military", 3.

<sup>37</sup> United States Africa Command Public Affairs. "Fact Sheet: U.S.-Africa Relations Chronology."

<sup>38</sup> Cooke and Morrison, Africa Policy 23-24.

<sup>39</sup> Bush, Decision Points 338-339.

implementation, it dramatically increased the number of Africans on anti-retroviral drugs to the tune of \$18 billion. The Bush administration also cancelled \$34 billion of African debt and increased aid to the continent<sup>40</sup>. These numbers appear to indicate a successful African policy but, as Nicolas Van de Walle argues, the Bush administration actually fell into the same patterns as previous administrations in Africa. The lack of a central strategic plan in which the various initiatives and programs could come together in one comprehensive goal harkened back to the ad-hoc Africa policies of the Cold War<sup>41</sup>. For example, while PEPFAR increased much-needed funding, its various programs were never fully integrated into an overall healthcare strategy<sup>42</sup>. The absence of a larger plan and a long-term vision for U.S. foreign policy in Africa has long been the underlying issue for unsuccessful programs and policy in Africa. As we will see in the chapters that follow, the implementation of AFRICOM has been no different.

### **The Creation of AFRICOM**

U.S. military engagement with Africa formally began in 1952 with North African nations added to DOD's European Command's (EUCOM) area of responsibility. In 1960, Sub-Saharan Africa was added to the U.S. Atlantic Command due to fears of communism spreading on the continent as African nations gained independence. Sub-Saharan Africa was transferred to the Strike Command just two years later and removed completely in 1971 when the command was renamed the Readiness Command. It was not until 1983 that Sub-Saharan Africa was brought back into DOD's command structure

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<sup>40</sup> Plaut, Martin. "Has Bush Been Africa's Best Friend?" *BBC News*, 16 January 2009. <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/africa/7831460.stm>> (9 July 2011).

<sup>41</sup> Van de Walle, Nicolas. "US Policy Towards Africa: The Bush Legacy and the Obama Administration," *African Affairs* 109, no. 434 (2009): 11

<sup>42</sup> Van de Walle, "U.S. Policy Towards Africa", 12.

through Reagan's policy of containment discussed above. The continent was split up among the Central Command (CENTCOM), the Pacific Command (PACOM) and EUCOM. These arrangements remained until George W. Bush created AFRICOM<sup>43</sup>.

The decision to create a unified Africa command was announced by President Bush on February 6, 2007.<sup>44</sup> However, it was more than a year and a half before AFRICOM was created (October 2008). Part of the reason for the delay is AFRICOM's atypical vision to be a military command that incorporates the increase of stability and development in Africa. McFate calls the command "a post-Cold War experiment" using "peace-building lessons learned since the fall of the Berlin Wall<sup>45</sup>." Historically, DOD's missions have been focused solely on combat and the decision to create a different type of military command, one that, by design, will have no direct involvement in combat, was the result of several factors. McFate points out that African states are not always willing or able to effectively govern all the territory within their borders and such an environment is ideal for the cultivation of terrorist safe-havens<sup>46</sup>. The stability of the continent is certainly a concern of DOD's and the threat of increased terrorist activity was a main reason (especially after 9/11) for the creation of AFRICOM as an "experimental command". Perhaps a bigger reason to reconfigure how this one command would operate is that the U.S. military was already spread too thin in Iraq and Afghanistan and becoming directly involved in Africa's conflicts would certainly be met with consternation by the American public.

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<sup>43</sup> Daniels, "United States Military", 1.

<sup>44</sup> McFate, Sean. "U.S. Africa Command: A New Strategic Paradigm?" Military Review (January-February 2008), 10.

<sup>45</sup> McFate, "U.S. Africa Command", 10.

<sup>46</sup> McFate, "U.S. Africa Command", 12.

AFRICOM's Public Affairs Office regularly publicizes briefings and fact sheets to elucidate the goal of the command's activities on the continent. As publicized by this office, AFRICOM's mission "in concert with other U.S. government agencies and international partners" is to "conduct sustained security engagement through military-to-military programs, military-sponsored activities, and other military operations as directed to promote a stable and secure African environment in support of U.S. foreign policy."<sup>47</sup> While the military is clearly the driving force of the command, there is no mention of direct combat on the part of the U.S. military in Africa. Indeed, the section following the outlining of AFRICOM's mission, entitled "Partnering with African Nations", is quick to outline the goals that "African Partners" have expressed. These four goals fall directly in line with AFRICOM's previously stated mission. The goals apparently shared by all "African partners" is to have "capable and accountable military forces", "professional security institutions", "the capability to dissuade, deter and defeat transnational threats" and "the capacity to support international peacekeeping efforts"<sup>48</sup>. It is curious that these are shared goals since no African leaders were consulted during the conceptualization of AFRICOM. All of these goals are beneficial to both the United States and Africa but as McFate points out, the theme of partnership is ubiquitous in DOD's dealings with AFRICOM and Africa yet DOD actively stays out of affairs on the ground<sup>49</sup>.

It is clear that the United States will not act as Africa's direct security provider. A recent New York Times article by Eric Schmitt points out that AFRICOM was initially created to train local military forces in order to strengthen existing programs in African

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<sup>47</sup> United States Africa Command Public Affairs. "U.S. African Command Fact Sheet." [Africom.mil](http://www.africom.mil) 11 May 2011. <<http://www.africom.mil/NEWSROOM/Documents/2011/5>> 8 February 2013.

<sup>48</sup> McFate, "U.S. Africa Command", 12.

<sup>49</sup> McFate, "U.S. Africa Command", 11.

nations. However, the role of the command has been altered as it confronts a new wave of terrorism without losing its resolve to not be drawn into conflicts on the continent<sup>50</sup>. Schmitt goes on to argue that with a staff of 2,000 and a budget of \$300 million<sup>51</sup>, AFRICOM does not have the resources to become directly involved. Yet, Andrew Feickert of the Congressional Research Service reports AFRICOM's budget for fiscal year 2013 as the second highest out of the six regional commands, at \$285,022<sup>52</sup>. AFRICOM's mission is to serve as a training and advisory "partner", to address situations that directly affect the U.S. while never becoming directly involved. General Carter Ham, former Commander of AFRICOM, emphasized that the philosophy behind AFRICOM is "African solutions to African problems"<sup>53</sup>. However, the underlying reality is that Africa must address these problems with the solutions prescribed by DOD.

Today AFRICOM is one of six DOD regional Combatant Commands: Northern Command (NORTHCOM), European Command (EUCOM), Pacific Command (PACOM), Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) and Central Command (CENTCOM)<sup>54</sup>. These commands divide the earth into areas over which the American military can more effectively exercise control by land, sea and air. Not one speck of land is left unaccounted for; the entire globe has been partitioned into DOD "Areas of Responsibility" (AORs). Each combatant command is comprised of personnel from all

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<sup>50</sup> Schmitt, Eric. "Militant Threats Test Role of a Pentagon Command in Africa." *The New York Times*. 11 February 2013. <[http://www.nytimes.com/2013/02/12/world/africa/militant-threats-test-pentagons-role-in-africa.html?pagewanted=1&\\_r=1&smid=re-share](http://www.nytimes.com/2013/02/12/world/africa/militant-threats-test-pentagons-role-in-africa.html?pagewanted=1&_r=1&smid=re-share)> 18 February 2013.

<sup>51</sup> Schmitt, "Militant Threats".

<sup>52</sup> Feickert, Andrew. "The Unified Command Plan and Combatant Commands: Background and Issues for Congress." *Congressional Research Service*. 3 January 2013. 12.

<sup>53</sup> Feickert, "The Unified Command", 12.

<sup>54</sup> There are three other Unified Combatant Commands that have functional responsibilities but are not limited to specific regions: Special Operations Command, Transportation Command and Strategic Command.

branches of the U.S. military. Surprisingly, the operations and management budgets of the commands are very similar to each other. PACOM had the largest budget at \$300,097 and EUCOM the lowest with \$119,267<sup>55</sup>. These numbers however do not reflect the cost of the actual forces associated with each command as they are funded separately. Additionally, operations are funded separately and it should be noted that the Special Operations Command had a budget of \$5,096,226 for fiscal year 2013<sup>56</sup>.

The resources, in terms of number of staff, authorized for each command are also quite similar. The number of authorized positions, both civilian and military, for AFRICOM was 1,637 in 2012. In terms of staffing numbers it is the smallest command but not by much. In the same year SOUTHCOM had 1,656 authorized staff, NORTHCOM 1,678, EUCOM 1,758 and PACOM more than doubling AFRICOM's numbers with 3,381<sup>57</sup>. These numbers, again, do not include the actual military forces that are carrying out the specific missions, operations and exercises. The similar budget and staffing numbers make AFRICOM appear to be on the same plane as the five other commands yet the threats addressed by AFRICOM are much greater than the other commands. AFRICOM's budget and staffing, therefore, should be the highest of the commands.

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<sup>55</sup> Feickert, "The Unified Command", 12.

<sup>56</sup> Feickert, "The Unified Command", 12.

<sup>57</sup> United States Government Accountability Office. "DOD Needs to Periodically Review and Improve Visibility of Combatant Commands' Resources." May 2013. <<http://www.gao.gov/assets/660/654638.pdf>> (17 April 2015). 43-60. This report intentionally excluded CENTCOM "and its corresponding service component commands due to their responsibilities to support ongoing military operations in Afghanistan during the past several years, which would have inhibited uniform comparisons across the commands" page 38.

### **Chapter Three: Said's Orientalism, the Foundation for DOD's Neo-Orientalism in**

#### **Africa**

As discussed in the previous chapter, Africa has never been at the forefront of America's concerns in terms of foreign policy. Instead, it has been viewed as a place of concern, a place to be pitied, and a continent of unknowns and at the same time a place that does not require a comprehensive, cohesive or long-term foreign policy strategy. Prior to the September 11, 2001 attacks, the United States selectively engaged with the continent when issues that affected the United States occurred. After the attacks, it became clear that the ad-hoc nature of U.S. foreign policy to Africa would no longer suffice if potential threats of terrorism were to be eliminated but at the same time the U.S. had little experience in Africa. DOD's claim of creating AFRICOM based on an equal partnership with Africa was simply not true. In reality, DOD has unconsciously taken advantage of archaic representations to legitimize their actions in Africa. By examining Said's work Orientalism in further depth and concentrating particularly on the chapter entitled "Orientalism Now", a clearer picture of what Orientalism is and how DOD manipulates it to America's advantage in Africa will emerge. Africa's "history" will then be examined to demonstrate the long-standing relationship of Africa as the "Other" to the U.S. and Western World "Self". Contemporary examples will follow as celebrity humanitarianism and "poverty porn" are discussed. How DOD has portrayed and imagined the continent of Africa today will follow as AFRICOM's mission statement, most recent posture statement and various articles published by the AFRICOM Office of Public Affairs are examined.



## **Orientalism Now**

Said characterizes Orientalism as a “system of representation” framed by a “set of forces” which made the Orient familiar to the West<sup>1</sup>. Orientalism was a constructed, esoteric knowledge of the Orient produced and reproduced by the West in order to make sense of a foreign and unfamiliar part of the world, which was menacing but at the same time intriguing. The Orient captivated Westerners who, in turn, formed beliefs, ideas and references regarding the Orient that throughout history went unchallenged and largely unchanged. Orientalism gave a connotation, as assumed background, an image to be mobilized from the collective imagination about the Orient. It was an image held in common, which could be called upon in the collective cultural imagination. Most of all, Orientalism was static. Western countries changed, they progressed and made advancements in medicine and science. The Orient did not.

Orientalism was, by definition, racist, ethnocentric and imperialist. However, there were few other tools at an individual’s disposal when interacting with other societies at the height of Orientalism. As Said points out, “biological determinism” and “moral-political admonishment” helped establish a point of reference for the Orient. They did not require examination on a personal level. Orientals were not people they were problems, subjects of study or things to be conquered. They were faceless and, more importantly, voiceless<sup>2</sup>. “Primitiveness...was the Orient, an idea to which anyone dealing with or writing about the Orient had to return, as if to a touchstone outlasting time or experience<sup>3</sup>”. Being Oriental overrode any other characteristics; one was an

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<sup>1</sup> Said, Orientalism 202-203.

<sup>2</sup> Said, Orientalism 207.

<sup>3</sup> Said, Orientalism 231.

Oriental before being a person and being Oriental meant being backward and primitive. Said goes on to say, “Mind and body are interdependent realities, both determined originally by a given set of geographical, biological and quasi-historical conditions<sup>4</sup>”. And the overarching characteristics of all Orientals were the same, a primitive and backward individual who was naturally inferior to their Western counterpart. Orientalism was imbued with the power of generalization. It converted entire civilizations into a single cultural reference.

At the height of Orientalism, no one knew better than to relegate individuals into a group based on their race and where they were born. Today, in the era of globalization, there is no excuse for such sweeping generalizations to be made about an entire region of the world. Race theory is no longer a dominant explanation of human differences nor is it seriously considered as fact. It is no longer acceptable to label inhabitants of a specific region and to assign them characteristics, cultural traits, shared history and an assumed future for the ease of lumping them in one easily defined group. The constructed boundaries invented by Europeans, which always resulted in granting legitimacy to Europeans to dominate non-Europeans due to their “natural” superiority determined by “science”, were unfounded. Today, one knows better than to put individuals in such constructed groupings or at least not to do so outwardly unless one wants to be labeled a bigot, a xenophobe or a racist and yet these generalizations are still relied upon, as further investigation into the West’s portrayal of Africa throughout history and AFRICOM later in this chapter will reveal.

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<sup>4</sup> Said, Orientalism 232.

According to Said, a shift in Orientalism occurred after the World Wars as production of Orientalist knowledge shifted from the French and the British to America due to a loss of European control over the world. As African nations quickly gained independence, European countries witnessed their global footprint momentarily diminish and in turn their positions of global power. This loss of empire, combined with the destruction that resulted from the World Wars and America's emergence as a global power resulted in the resignation of the French and British as the main producers of Orientalist texts. The authority over Orientalism was more specifically reallocated to a "committee of experts". It was broken into many parts in the social sciences but all still served the Orientalist dogmas<sup>5</sup>. One such sector was the academic notion of area specialists who claimed expertise based on geographical region. This expertise was put to service in academia, private enterprise, government and military even though America did not have a tradition of Orientalism when it inherited this geopolitical position of dominance.

The type of Orientalist knowledge created in America was different from European Orientalism due to America's lack of history with the East. As Said explains: "In the United States knowledge of the Orient never passed through the refining and reticulating and reconstructing process, ... , that it went through in Europe. Furthermore the imaginative investment was never made either, perhaps because the American frontier, the one that counted, was the westward one<sup>6</sup>". During the height of European imperialism, the United States was more focused on growing its own immediate territory rather than overseas expansion. American Orientalism was a turning point in global

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<sup>5</sup> Said, Orientalism 284.

<sup>6</sup> Said, Orientalism 290.

power relations as social scientists, especially in area studies, did not use literature as a reference but “facts”. These “facts” which were manufactured by “experts” led to reproductions of “certain cultural hostility”<sup>7</sup>. This new “knowledge” was not based on language and literature, as the previous version of Orientalism had been, but on so-called “expertise”. These experts, however, lacked actual expertise in the Orient. European Orientalists often devoted their lives to the study of Oriental languages while the modern Orientalist is appeased by translations and the other’s interpretations. Despite this shift, the power of the created knowledge remained the same, “Only the Orientalist can interpret the Orient, the Orient being radically incapable of interpreting itself”<sup>8</sup>.

The “principal dogmas” common in all European Orientalist knowledge were passed on to American Orientalism and still exist today in America’s relationship with Africa through DOD. The four principal dogmas are:

- 1) the absolute and systematic difference between the rational, developed, humane, superior West and the aberrant, undeveloped, inferior Orient.
- 2) Abstractions about the Orient, especially those based on texts representing “classical” Oriental civilization, are always preferable to direct, modern evidence.
- 3) The Orient is eternal, uniform and incapable of defining itself therefore highly generalize and systematic vocabulary to describe it is inevitable and even scientifically objective.
- 4) The Orient is, fundamentally, something to be feared or to be controlled<sup>9</sup>.

Said acknowledges that there is resistance to these dogmas however the myriad of “knowledge” which has been and is continually created by academic institutions, governments agencies, think tanks and traditions leave little space for a substantial opponent’s voice to be heard. The Orient continues to be a fixed, unchanging and passive region requiring the dynamic and powerful West. The Oriental is the source of

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<sup>7</sup> Said, Orientalism 291.

<sup>8</sup> Said, Orientalism 289.

<sup>9</sup> Said, Orientalism 300-301.

information and the Orientalist is the source of knowledge. The Orient in American Orientalism remains static and fixed; it cannot develop into a modern society even with the Orientalist's help.

The power of Orientalism today is of particular concern to Said. The same stereotypes and "facts" created by Europeans and then passed on into America's Orientalism continues today. The so-called experts in such matters are simply spewing "old Orientalist stereotypes dressed up in policy jargon," their expert knowledge is laid in "foundations of sand"<sup>10</sup>. Orientalism allows for the over-simplification of one area of the world for it to be more easily controlled and understood by another. Said points out the grave danger of "Orientalizing the Oriental." As the world becomes more globalized, Orientals come to the United States for education however they are taught using principles based in Orientalism which results in the individual gaining "knowledge" and thus feeling superior to his fellow countrymen however he is only ever recognized as a "native informant" in the U.S. and will only ever hold that role. He cannot create new Oriental knowledge but only reinforce the knowledge already present<sup>11</sup>. In much the same way, knowledge is becoming "standardized" across the globe and Orientalism is the dominant standard to such an extent that it goes largely unquestioned in academia. Globalization has allowed the transfer of images of the Orient from the United States back to the Orient, "the modern Orient, in short, participates in its own Orientalizing"<sup>12</sup>. Orientalism is thus a failure of the intellectual realm, as it allows stereotypes and placing people in generalized categories hundreds of years old to continue to influence

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<sup>10</sup> Said, Orientalism 321.

<sup>11</sup> Said, Orientalism 324.

<sup>12</sup> Said, Orientalism 325.

contemporary scholarship, political moves and military tactics. It is not merely intellectually dishonest but it is also a failure in terms of the human experience, the uniqueness of individuality has been and continues to be erased by Orientalism<sup>13</sup>. Most damaging of all, Orientalism has become so ingrained in all areas of contemporary life that it is rarely questioned by the West or, in this case, Africans. Instead it is viewed as fact, providing legitimacy for DOD to exert its “expertise” in Africa under the misnomer of partnership.

### **The “History” of Africa and Africans**

The stereotypes of Africa are many and are primarily negative: poor, uncivilized, diseased, polluted, violent, backward, undeveloped, frightening, barbaric, unstable, illiterate, et cetera but Africa has always been a highly diverse and resource-rich place. When it was “discovered” by the European powers, they simply took whatever they wanted including the mass exportation of humans to fuel the industry and growth of the New World. By pillaging the continent through setting up colonies for the purpose of raiding and extracting resources, this theft was refined and made more efficient over time. As the West prospered and their industries at home grew, Africa and Africans remained the same, frozen in time. The diversity of Africa and its history has been painted with a broad brush and generalized due to a lack of written historical sources. Europeans did not attach much value to oral history and a people without written, historical accounts were easy to dismiss as without a past. Westerns initially approached Africa with an inherent superiority. They saw the continent as wild, unexplored and most

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<sup>13</sup> Said, Orientalism 328.

of all unclaimed swaths of land upon which to stake a claim for their country. The only thought given to the native inhabitants was how they could be used to further the Western purpose of increasing production and development at home. As will be discussed, this assumed Western superiority in Africa continues today through DOD's Neo-Orientalism: a modern iteration of Said's Orientalism in which authority over Africa's military future is usurped by the United States, the leading global military power which therefore believes it has the authority, "expertise" and "knowledge" to dominate Africa's security agenda. The geo-cultural game has changed through time but the rules remain the same.

The Europeans, who "discovered" Africa, initially relied on racism to assume their superiority. Edward Blyden, often called the father of Pan-Africanism, addresses the supposed "natural" inferiority of the African race by tracing it back to the first book of the Bible in his 1857 work entitled A Vindication of the African Race; Being a Brief Examination of the Arguments in Favor of African Inferiority. In Genesis, the progenitor of the African race is said to be Ham, the son of Noah, against whom a curse is made, which he will supposedly carry with him and his ancestral line through time<sup>14</sup>. These few short verses are enough to affirm Western dominance as fact and doom Africans to slavery. As Blyden puts it, it is "fruitless to endeavor to elevate the African; for he is doomed to perpetual servitude; and is, therefore fitted for no other condition."<sup>15</sup> The supposed curse put on Ham also excused the European from making any efforts to educate or offer assistance to Africans. It was the natural way of the world dictated by God, that Europeans would be superior to Africans. Blyden wrote this work in 1857, yet similar attitudes towards the continent continue today albeit without the overt racism.

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<sup>14</sup> Blyden, Edward W. A Vindication of the African Race; Being a Brief Examination of the Arguments in Favor of African Inferiority (Monrovia: Gaston Killian, 1857), 11.

<sup>15</sup> Blyden, A Vindication 13.

Not only did Blyden reject the notion that Africans were inferior but he rejected the belief that God appointed Westerners as superior. “Where is the sentence in which God ever appointed you, the Anglo-Saxon race,...four thousand years after Noah and his children had gone to their graves in peace, to be the executors of Noah’s will<sup>16</sup>.” Blyden was one of the first Pan-Africanists to question this racial superiority. His successors took the matter further.

W.E.B. Du Bois also wrote about racism and the origin of Western domination. He believes the “doctrine of the Superior Race”<sup>17</sup> emerged in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and points out several methods by which Europeans and Americans became masters of the world due to the color of their skin. He points out that Europe was largely peaceful during these two centuries, at least within the confines of the continent. Meanwhile European powers waged wars abroad “in jealousy over the ownership of the little people.”<sup>18</sup> This hunger for increasing territory and wealth and the assumed superiority of Europeans was based on race. The African slave trade laid the foundation for the theory of race as the act of forcibly removing people from their homeland itself was degrading, but it went a step further as physical labor and anyone who labored for another was clearly lower class<sup>19</sup>. Labor was undignified and viewed as the inevitable fate of colored people just as it was natural for white Europeans to live off of the toils of this labor. Science and religion soon backed up this declaration and the word “Negro” was invented in order to link color with race and the black race to degradation. The white

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<sup>16</sup> Blyden, *A Vindication* 23.

<sup>17</sup> Du Bois, W.E. Burghardt. *The World and Africa: An inquiry into the part which Africa has played in world history* (New York: International Publishers, 1965), 17 & 27. The theory that white people from Europe are natural rulers of mankind and especially of yellow, brown and black peoples.

<sup>18</sup> Du Bois, *The World and Africa* 18.

<sup>19</sup> Du Bois, *The World and Africa* 19.



race was portrayed only in a positive light, as clean and superior while the black race filled the opposing and always negative categories, just as it was with Orientalism. Europeans then deliberately distorted the history of Africa to the disadvantage of Africans and “every effort was made in archaeology, history, and biography, in biology, psychology, and sociology, to prove the all but universal assumption that the color line had a scientific basis.”<sup>20</sup> Any achievements or contributions made by black people were erased or minimized. Africans were diminished in every way possible in order to ease Western dominance and boost American industry. During this period, literature and statements made by “experts” began appearing which further distanced the “superior” Europeans and Americans from the truth about how their comfortable lives came to be<sup>21</sup>. Simultaneously, white heroes were being created “by lopping off their sins and canonizing their virtues...the young learned not necessarily the truth, but that aspect and interpretation of the truth which the rulers of the world wished them to know and follow.”<sup>22</sup> White history was also being rewritten for further validation of white racial superiority and this revised history was taught in order to ensure it was perpetuated.

Europeans believed they were naturally, biologically and by God’s will the only people who deserved to rule the world. They rationalized the invasion and conquest of Africa as their destiny and attributed their success to their mastery of civilization evidenced by European cities, all the while ignoring the costs of exploitation<sup>23</sup>. But it was not only invasion and theft which arose but the destruction and replacement of daily

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<sup>20</sup> Du Bois, The World and Africa 20.

<sup>21</sup> Du Bois, The World and Africa 22.

<sup>22</sup> Du Bois, The World and Africa 24.

<sup>23</sup> Du Bois, The World and Africa 33.

life, social barriers and indigenous laws<sup>24</sup>. For Du Bois the worst aspect of colonialism was the contradiction of tremendous poverty in the colonies resulting in wealth, prosperity and comfort in Europe. This contradiction was presented as natural and “every device of science was used” in order for Europeans to maintain this “natural” dominance. Science was rewritten so that evolution “proved” races other than white were not as developed and all historical achievements were attributed to whites<sup>25</sup>. Du Bois concludes by acknowledging that not all of Europe’s actions in the colonies resulted in destruction and oppression, indeed to lump all of their actions in such a category would be no different than their fabrication of science, history and biology<sup>26</sup>. Despite the amount of time that has passed since Du Bois’ writing, and the time that has passed since Europeans intentionally rewrote and fabricated knowledge, a startling amount of representations and stereotypes regarding Africa and Africans remains today.

In the present day, celebrity humanitarianism relies on a collective notion that Africa is a place that requires help and that it is one’s moral duty to become involved. In much the same way that Orientalism called upon a commonly held view of the Orient to extend its agenda of global dominance. It is not new for celebrities to become politically involved and to act as a spokesperson for their viewpoints but it has only been recently that celebrities have nominated themselves to take part in the politics of development and eradicating poverty. Paul David Hewson, better known as Bono, the lead singer of U2 is perhaps the most well-known celebrity humanitarian. He has hosted concert tours and created non-profit organizations, such as cofounding the One campaign, thanks to his

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<sup>24</sup> Du Bois, The World and Africa 35-36.

<sup>25</sup> Du Bois, The World and Africa 37.

<sup>26</sup> Du Bois, The World and Africa 41.

position as a celebrity. The dangers of Bono and other celebrities taking on causes for which they are not necessarily trained, equipped or competent to handle goes beyond their potential for failure. The actual outcome of their agendas is erasing the complexities of the issues by oversimplifying the solutions<sup>27</sup>. Celebrities intentionally abbreviate issues to facilitate the issues' appeal to the masses, but the reality of the situation and the process of making changes is much more complex. Ultimately, these campaigns may be doing more harm than good. Celebrities may bring an issue to the public's attention but as time progresses and no solutions are found, the issue falls out of favor. It fades as a fad and garnering support for it may be more difficult for other organizations in the future as a result.

One of the tools used by these so-called celebrity diplomats (and non-governmental organizations and journalists) is the use of images rife with poverty, showing unsmiling and malnourished children who are shabbily dressed and maybe even some insects on their face, with the sole purpose of evoking emotions. The use of such exploitive images has been labeled "poverty porn" or "famine porn". Much like celebrity slogans, these images present one, simplified snapshot to represent a much larger and more complex situation. These images use the public's collective imagination about "what Africa is like" in the same way Orientalism did. According to Emily Roenigk, these misrepresented images cause the wrong person to be empowered in several ways<sup>28</sup>. It misrepresents poverty in order to make the solution appear simple, typically a monetary donation. Ideologies such as the "white savior complex" are perpetuated by these

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<sup>27</sup> Dieter, Heribert and Rajiv Kumar. "The Downside of Celebrity Diplomacy: The Neglected Complexity of Development." *Global Governance*. 14 (2008): 259-264.260

<sup>28</sup> Roenigk, Emily. "5 Reasons 'Poverty Porn' Empowers the Wrong Person." *Huffington Post*. 16 April 2014. <[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/emily-roenigk/poverty-charity-media\\_b\\_5155627.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/emily-roenigk/poverty-charity-media_b_5155627.html)> (8 June 2014).

images, which paint the poor as “helpless beneficiaries” in opposition to the white “saviors” who must act to change the poor’s fate. Poverty porn objectifies the poor and robs them of “agency, autonomy and potential”<sup>29</sup>. The subjects of such images are not autonomous actors with the potential for transformation but voiceless, hopeful recipients. This practice of representing the poorest sector of humanity for the purpose of tugging on the public’s heartstrings to elicit a reaction is one more example of how Neo-Orientalism in Africa can be, and is being, used for multiple purposes.

Riina Yrjölä takes this critical view further by examining the discursive and imaginary effects of celebrity humanitarians. She addresses how celebrities represent Africans, how they act and how truth is created through their actions and representations. The “Africa” represented and created by celebrity humanitarians is not simply a place but also a space that constitutes a purpose in the world system<sup>30</sup>. As has been mentioned, Western interventions in Africa, throughout history, have been justified under efforts to modernize, civilize and improve the plight of the continent. “Africa” has long been a cause to rally around, a passive victim for the West to rescue. According to Yrjölä, there are two imagined “Africas” which have come into existence via documentaries, media and discourse: Contemporary Hell and Eternal Home<sup>31</sup>. The discourse of Contemporary Hell portrays Africa as a diseased and undeveloped place in need of outside intervention to improve. Just as before, the necessity of alleviating poverty in Africa is linked to the success of Western civilization and connects “the continent’s humanitarian crises as

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<sup>29</sup> Roenigk, “5 Reasons”.

<sup>30</sup> Yrjölä, Riina. “The Invisible Violence of Celebrity Humanitarianism: Soft Images and Hard Words in the Making and Unmaking of Africa.” *World Political Science Review* 5, no. 1 (2009): 2.

<sup>31</sup> Yrjölä, “The Invisible Violence”, 9.

potential risks and threats to Western hegemony<sup>32</sup>”. The alleviation of poverty in Africa is not only a question of ethics and moral responsibility but of security in the West. It should not come as a surprised that this same reason was among those stated for the creation of AFRICOM.

The discourse of Africa as Eternal Home is portrayed by celebrity humanitarians’ personal experiences in Africa. When they visit Africa it is not a place of fire and brimstone but a peaceful and beautiful place full of friendly and joyful people. These two conflicting “Africas” demonstrate that the continent requires a Westerner in order to function effectively. Without Western intervention Africa is doomed to remain a contemporary hell. With the help of celebrity humanitarianism “the African story once again repeats itself. In the name of humanity and global justice, to give voice and vision to Africa, the blank white African map becomes filled with Western emotions, wants, fears, and desires. As a distorting mirror, Africa reflects back the images and truths that are carefully constructed and painted on its surface<sup>33</sup>.”

Additionally, white celebrity humanitarianism has deemphasized the efforts of black celebrity humanitarians whose work, in many cases, preceded that of white celebrity humanitarians. For example, as the Reverend Al Sharpton emphasized in Michael Jackson’s eulogy, Michael Jackson’s musical career brought people of various races and backgrounds together long before aid was a pet cause adopted by white celebrities and addressed through fundraising via music festivals. Jackson’s music

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<sup>32</sup> Yrjölä, “The Invisible Violence”, 11.

<sup>33</sup> Yrjölä, “The Invisible Violence”, 16.

created a platform for people to connect the world over and, Sharpton alleges, for American's to vote for a black man as president<sup>34</sup>.

The discourses perpetuated by white celebrity humanitarians portray humanitarianism as a purely Western act and Africa as an uncivilized continent requiring the West's help to rise out of the "contemporary hell". Africa's past was produced by Westerners and so its future should also be under Western guidance. A "circular" and "self-referential story" has emerged<sup>35</sup>. The same narratives repeat themselves as the West's assumed "natural" leadership in global politics continues largely undisputed.

### **Neo-Orientalism: DOD's "Africa"**

The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 marked a turning point in how the United States, and specifically the Pentagon, perceive and interact with the rest of the world. Over the course of the last 14 years since the attacks, Orientalism has also shifted. Today, the "Orient" itself is no longer the single focus of Orientalism. It has expanded, geographically, to the regions of the world perceived of as "ungovernable" and therefore ripe for terrorism to flourish, most notably the continent of Africa. As terrorist attacks have continued in the U.S. and Europe, the perceived threat of such attacks weighs heavily on the minds and responsibilities of the largest military in the world. DOD has cultivated a method of interacting with Africa through AFRICOM using Neo-Orientalism. It has shifted the focus of Orientalism to not only include the countries with which we are at war but to incorporate potential future aggressors. This shift in Orientalism has not been a conscious one. The Pentagon has not developed or promoted

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<sup>34</sup> Sharpton, Al. "Michael Jackson Memorial Service." YouTube. 7 July 2009. <[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_MAKLq865bk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_MAKLq865bk)> (6 September 2015).

<sup>35</sup> Yrjölä, "The Invisible Violence", 17.

this Neo-Orientalism just as the European Orientalists in the 19<sup>th</sup> century did not deliberately create Orientalism. It is occurring as a byproduct of how DOD interacts with African leaders and elites, how it portrays its missions and exercises on the continent to the world. These interactions are carried out in much the same way as the Europeans interacted with the Orient; the overarching characteristics of all Africans are the same and the continent cannot progress militarily and developmentally without direct assistance from AFRICOM.

AFRICOM has been praised, criticized and accused of being downright imperialist. Each of these points of view is not without merit and will be examined in turn, but first an examination of how the command portrays itself is in order. For starters, AFRICOM's current mission statement does not mention Africa by name<sup>36</sup>. It describes what the command aims to do in order to reach the ultimate goal of advancing U.S. interests, improving conditions on the continent is of secondary importance. The "what we do" section of AFRICOM's website make it clear that furthering U.S. foreign policy is the main concern; all of AFRICOM's missions, exercises, operations and programs are simply a means to this end. Such operations are apparently conducted in "close cooperation" and the command's primary role is to advise and assist while African militaries carry out the actual operation, thus dictating the operation while sparing American manpower and resources. AFRICOM takes the lead on other operations. However, such operations are the minority. The most important aspect of every single operation is that it is "executed as part of a whole of U.S. government approach to

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<sup>36</sup> Per AFRICOM's website, "United States Africa Command, in concert with interagency and international partners, builds defense capabilities, responds to crisis, and deters and defeats transnational threats in order to advance U.S. national interests and promote regional security, stability, and prosperity." <<http://www.africom.mil/what-we-do>> (29 May 2015).

achieve U.S. national objectives.”<sup>37</sup> No matter who carries out the operation, America benefits.

General David Rodriguez, the current Commander of AFRICOM, echoed this overarching interest in his 2015 Posture Statement before the Senate Armed Services Committee stating that preventing terrorism, reinforcing U.S. global security objectives, protecting U.S. citizens and ensuring the security of the global economic system are America’s main interests in Africa<sup>38</sup>. He acknowledges the recent economic and population growth in Africa but only to highlight the uncertainty of its future without proper guidance from the U.S.<sup>39</sup>. Rodriguez goes on to make sweeping generalizations about corruption, linking crime with terrorism and the dangers of Africa’s “under-governed regions and porous borders”<sup>40</sup>. The image that emerges is clear; although AFRICOM was created to further American foreign policy, without America the future of Africa is uncertain but certainly one to be feared. Rodriguez begins his statement by acknowledging that DOD created AFRICOM out of American interests however halfway through he switches to describing “advancing our *mutual* interests and promoting *shared* values.”<sup>41</sup> This should come as no surprise, America dictates the terms and then finds people in power that will agree or say that they agree in order to garner the support of the largest military in the world. Rodriguez does mention specific regions and countries in Africa but does not name a single African “partner” who shares in these mutual interests.

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<sup>37</sup> United States Africa Command. “What We Do.” [Africom.mil](http://www.africom.mil/what-we-do). <<http://www.africom.mil/what-we-do>> (29 May 2015).

<sup>38</sup> Rodriguez, David M. “United States Africa Command 2015 Posture Statement” 26 March 2015. <[http://www.armed-services.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/Rodriguez\\_03-26-15.pdf](http://www.armed-services.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/Rodriguez_03-26-15.pdf)> (12 June 2015), 2.

<sup>39</sup> Rodriguez, “United States”, 5-6.

<sup>40</sup> Rodriguez, “United States”, 6.

<sup>41</sup> Rodriguez, “United States”, 13. (emphasis added)



These examinations demonstrate three of Said's four "dogmas of Orientalism" (outlined above). The first dogma, the absolute superiority of "Us" (the United States) in relation to the "Other" (Africa), is evident throughout AFRICOM's "what we do" statement and Rodriguez's posture statement. If the U.S. did not view itself as superior to the continent of Africa it would not embark on such an ambitious project of attempting to control all of Africa to promote Western values. The generalizations made about Africa and the descriptions of the continent through the eyes of the West without any input from Africans demonstrate the third dogma. The fourth dogma, that the Other is to be feared and therefore controlled, is evident in Rodriguez's statement. Indeed the track record of U.S.-Africa relations proves that the U.S. does not engage the continent unless there is an apparent benefit for the U.S. to do so. The second dogma, that abstractions are preferred to facts, is not present because there is no longer a need for abstractions. The United States creates the facts and produces the knowledge regarding what AFRICOM is doing thus there is not the same need for using abstractions as the original version of Orientalism required.

In Said's Orientalism, Europeans and Americans feared the Orient for its perceived strength and ability to mobilize on the basis of religion as evidenced by the many military confrontations between the powers over the centuries. In Neo-Orientalism America is fearful of Africa's perceived weakness, a weakness that has made the continent more vulnerable to potential terrorist activities that DOD aims to eradicate. The Pentagon is also fearful that this weakness may lead Africa to create a deeper alliance with China to act against Western power.

The biggest difference between Orientalism and Neo-Orientalism is the ways in which created knowledge is disconnected from reality. In 18<sup>th</sup> century Orientalism, “knowledge” was disconnected from reality by four elements: expansion, historical confrontation, sympathy and classification<sup>42</sup>. Europeans built Orientalism on the examination of Oriental literature, written in native tongues, and on the personal interactions with the Orient and its people over the course of long stays in the Orient. A personal element, a “sympathy”, existed in classical Orientalism that has disappeared from Neo-Orientalism. There is little openness to a personal encounter in Neo-Orientalism. As the below articles written by AFRICOM’s Office of Public Affairs will demonstrate, there is little interaction between DOD and Africans other than in pre-determined, structured environments. American military personnel do not reside amongst the people as classical Orientalists did; rather they remain tucked away at Camp Lemonnier or even further, at AFRICOM’s headquarters in Stuttgart, Germany. Similarly, AFRICOM personnel do not routinely receive language instruction. Indeed, no indigenous African languages are offered at the DOD’s foreign language training facility, the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center<sup>43</sup>. Neo-Orientalism has disconnected itself further from reality than classical Orientalism while continuing to create “knowledge”.

AFRICOM’s Office of Public Affairs regularly publishes articles regarding the Command’s missions, programs, exercises and even some human-interest stories. These articles, however, are brief (most are less than two pages in length) and largely uninformative. These publications hardly qualify as journalism but they are the best way

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<sup>42</sup> Said, Orientalism 120.

<sup>43</sup> Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center. “Languages taught at DLIFLC and duration of courses”. DLIFLC.edu. <<http://www.dliflc.edu/languages-at-dliflc/>> (18 October 2015).

to examine what the command says about itself and how it portrays itself to the outside world. Several articles regarding AFRICOM's missions, programs and exercises during the last year were examined. Not surprisingly, these articles demonstrate little in terms of AFRICOM's mission of partnership and close cooperation. Instead, they reinforce Said's dogmas of Orientalism and further prove that DOD is operating through Neo-Orientalism in Africa. The human-interest stories published by the Office of Public Affairs further reinforce the evidence that DOD is using the same principles present in Orientalism in Africa today while simultaneously demonstrating the "eternal home" aspect of representing Africa.

For the most part, AFRICOM's publications reduce Africans to nameless and voiceless objects. Westerners are regularly quoted and named but their so-called local partners are usually mute. The outcome of the mission/program/operation is expressed by the Westerner and always in a positive light. For example, a May 13, 2015 article entitled "NATO Marine Forces Work With West African Partners"<sup>44</sup> mentions the exact number of marines from each NATO country but mentions no specifics about the exercises conducted. The article names and quotes three of the NATO marines but no Africans are named or quoted. These quotes by the NATO marines express the positive outcome of the exercises and the Westerner's assessments of the local military ranging from their "good attitudes" and showing "a real desire to train with us" to the Westerners evaluating the skill level and organization of the local militaries. The comments and evaluations are completely one-sided yet the article states, "the training engagements...allowed the participants to learn from each other and develop a working

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<sup>44</sup> Cushman, Steve. "NATO Marine Forces Work With West African Partners." AFRICOM Office of Public Affairs 13 May 2015. < <http://www.africom.mil/newsroom/article/25410/nato-marine-forces-work-with-west-african-partners> > (19 June 2015).

relationship.” This line is simply paying lip service to AFRICOM’s mission statement; there is no mention of anything specific learned by the NATO faction.

Another recent article, “AFRICOM Funds Humanitarian Mission in Cameroon”<sup>45</sup>, by Bardha Azari, does a much better job of explaining the mission. This article also quotes “one of the citizens receiving medical assistance” whose name was apparently not important enough to notate, as praising the assistance: “Today is our day; we have been found; our prayers have been answered.” The individual’s identity is not important, only the sentiment is. Both articles are clearly written for and by Westerners. The Westerner’s interpretation of the event is what is important, the more generalized and simplified Africa and Africans are portrayed, the easier it is for the intended audience to understand.

The article in which Africans were quoted the most is one regarding two African-born U.S. military personnel, returning to Africa for an exercise. The jovial title, “Sons of Africa, Sailors of America”<sup>46</sup> names and quotes two Ghanaian born U.S. officers, focusing on a Lieutenant Eric Kwaku Boateng. The article explains Boateng’s move to the United States to pursue a college degree and his eventual involvement with the U.S. Navy explaining that he was specifically called upon for this exercise due to his familiarity with West Africa. He is fulfilling the role of what Said called a “native informant”, an individual who was educated in the West and returns to his native land feeling superior to his fellow country-men but will never be accepted as an equal by the

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<sup>45</sup> Azari, Bardha. “AFRICOM Funds Humanitarian Mission in Cameroon.” AFRICOM Office of Public Affairs. 8 June 2015 <<http://www.africom.mil/newsroom/article/25443/africom-funds-humanitarian-mission-in-cameroon>> (19 June 2015).

<sup>46</sup> Krigbaum, David R. “Sons of Africa, Sailors of America.” AFRICOM Office of Public Affairs. 7 April 2015. <<http://www.africom.mil/newsroom/article/25327/sons-of-africa-sailors-of-america>> (19 June 2015).

West. Boateng identifies himself with the U.S. military personnel more so than with his fellow Ghanaians. The other officer, Lieutenant Max Annani, calls himself “a bridge between the two cultures” clearly also espousing the role of native informant. This article is also reminiscent of Said’s assertion that being Oriental overrides any other characteristics. Indeed, attention is only paid to these Africans because they are African and in a unique scenario in service with the U.S. military in Africa.

Another human-interest story regarding a monthly soccer game played by U.S. forces from Camp Lemonnier and residents of Chebelley Village in Djibouti<sup>47</sup> also reinforces the characteristics of Orientalism. Not a single African is quoted in the article, rendering them faceless, nameless and voiceless. The game allegedly helps to “grow and develop the continuing friendship between the camp and the town” but once again only the opinions of U.S. military personnel matter. A sergeant is quoted stating that it makes the military more familiar to the townspeople and enables the military to help the residents in the future. It is assumed that all who live in the town welcome the soccer game, that there are no negative feelings associated with it or with Camp Lemonnier and its personnel and most egregious of all, that the U.S. military will cause no harm but only help the residents surrounding a U.S military base on their soil. The African is once again over-simplified and so insignificant to the story that their opinion is not sought out.

The principles of Orientalism have become so ingrained in how the West treats the rest of the world that they are rarely questioned today. Orientalism is a powerful and invisible force that has been reconstituted and adapted into Neo-Orientalism to suit the changing relations of the U.S. and Africa in the post-9/11 world. AFRICOM’s Office of

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<sup>47</sup> Maysonet, Nathan. “Building Friendships one Soccer Game at a Time.” *AFRICOM Office of Public Affairs*. 8 May 2015. < <http://www.africom.mil/newsroom/article/25397/building-friendships-one-soccer-game-at-a-time>> (19 June 2015).

Public Affairs portrays everything the command does in a positive light while embracing the dogmas of Orientalism, whether they are aware of it or not, but the critics and proponents of AFRICOM have a very different interpretation on what DOD is doing in Africa. The next chapter will examine the differing views of AFRICOM while continuing to demonstrate how Neo-Orientalism has made AFRICOM possible.

#### **Chapter Four: AFRICOM in Africa Motives and Predicted Effects**

As I have demonstrated in the previous chapter, AFRICOM portrays its activities in Africa as completely positive. Examining AFRICOM's Office of Public Affairs publications did not produce a single article in which the command was portrayed in a negative or neutral light. However, the Pentagon's motive for the command, the command's operations in Africa and the future implications of AFRICOM are viewed very differently by other, outside, sources. These conflicting views of AFRICOM will be explored in this chapter and further evidence of the command being a Neo-Orientalizing force will be garnered. AFRICOM's mission statement prioritizes containing terrorism as one of its objectives in order to mitigate future acts of terrorism. The success of this objective so far and whether this objective is viable will be explored. The unspoken motives for DOD's turn towards Africa will be examined, most notably the proposition that the United States created AFRICOM, in part, to gain control of the continent's precious resources especially its oil. Related to this implied motive is the overarching goal of combatting China's influence in Africa. The predicted effects of AFRICOM are primarily negative for the continent. AFRICOM will further degrade peace and security on the continent. Additionally it will harm what little democratic strides have been made since independence.

#### **Terrorism in Africa**

It is no coincidence that AFRICOM was founded in the wake of the 9/11 attacks. Bush's proclamation of a "Global War on Terror" made it a necessity, in the eyes of the Pentagon, to more closely monitor, and to increase DOD's direct control over, large

Muslim populations across the world. Diane Chinonso Orefo points out that DOD perceived Africa as a potential breeding ground for terrorism against the U.S. due to the continent's large Muslim population "which is assumed to be predisposed to Islamic radicalism", the sizeable number of failed and failing states, poverty and so-called ungovernable spaces<sup>1</sup>. Indeed, AFRICOM's publications and personnel have also stated these factors leading to terrorism as a reason for the command. For Abdoulaye Saine, however, these factors alone are not sufficient conditions for the creation or sheltering of terrorists in Africa. Rather it is the political, economic, social and military organization of specific countries that lead to violent expression<sup>2</sup>. In the post-9/11 world, Islam and international terrorism have become synonymous for many people and organizations, including the Pentagon. Islam has replaced communism as the "global devil"<sup>3</sup>. But being a Muslim, being poor or inhabiting a so-called "ungovernable space" does not necessarily predispose one to being a terrorist or harboring one. Saine warns of the danger that lumping various militant groups into one labeled terrorist may have. Boko Haram, Al-Shabab and the Lord's Resistance Army do not target Westerners. Their grievances are not with the West but within their own regions, opposing the dominant political system.

Although Saine is correct when stating that one's environment and one's religion do not necessarily predict terrorism, he misinterprets the threat and potential danger of what he labels militant groups and what the Pentagon designates as terrorist groups.

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<sup>1</sup> Orefo, Diane Chinonso. "U.S. security interests in Africa." In United States-Africa Security Relations, edited by Kelechi A. Kalu and George Klay Kieh Jr., 85-102. (New York: Routledge, 2014), 98.

<sup>2</sup> Saine, Abdoulaye. "The U.S.'s global war on terror in Africa." In United States-Africa Security Relations, edited by Kelechi A. Kalu and George Klay Kieh Jr., 103-115. (New York: Routledge, 2014), 104-106.

<sup>3</sup> Saine, "The U.S.'s global war", 103.



Saine's analysis of militant groups on the continent omitted Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). Perhaps Saine, like many academics, does not consider the Maghreb to be part of Africa, referring instead to sub-Saharan Africa in his study. Or perhaps he omitted AQIM because the group's objectives are not regionally contained. AQIM seeks to install Islamic fundamentalist governments in North Africa under the rule of Sharia law<sup>4</sup>. An Islamic Kingdom in North Africa is the ultimate goal, which will be obtained by ridding the region of local enemy regimes. AQIM has not directly attacked the U.S. or Europe but it is a formal ally and affiliate of core Al Qaeda, as is Al Shabaab, and individuals with links to AQIM have been arrested in Europe. A number of recent terrorist acts attributed to AQIM have directly targeted foreigners, such as the 2013 Westgate shopping mall attack in Kenya and the 2015 Bardo Museum attack in Tunisia<sup>5</sup>. Hillary Clinton and General Carter Ham, the former head of AFRICOM, both linked AQIM with the 2012 attack on the U.S. embassy in Benghazi<sup>6</sup>. Saine is correct that Boko Haram has not made Westerners a target but the group did swear its allegiance to the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), now reportedly calling itself the Islamic State in West Africa<sup>7</sup>. Saine is correct that the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) does not have any known links to outside terrorist groups nor has it targeted Westerners, but the small number of members, the small scale of their attacks and the lack of global connections make this group less of a priority for DOD.

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<sup>4</sup> Laub, Zachary. "Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQMI)." *Council on Foreign Relations*. 27 March 2015. <<http://www.cfr.org/terrorist-organizations-and-networks/al-qaeda-islamic-maghreb-aqim/p12717>> (19 June 2015).

<sup>5</sup> Joscelyn, Thomas. "Terrorism in Africa: The Imminent Threat to the United States." *The Long War Journal*. 29 April 2015. <<http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2015/04/terrorism-in-africa-the-imminent-threat-to-the-united-states.php>> (19 June 2015).

<sup>6</sup> Laub, "Al Qaeda".

<sup>7</sup> Joscelyn, "Terrorism in Africa".

AFRICOM was not created after the bombings of the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, nor was it created when there was suspicion that Sudan was harboring Osama bin Laden. DOD did, however, conduct two counterterrorism operations in Africa prior to the establishment of AFRICOM under the larger Operation Enduring Freedom. Catherine Besteman argues that both operations have increased regional conflicts and enabled rather than reduced the growth of terrorism in Africa by sparking humanitarian catastrophes, displacing populations and unified local domestic-oriented resistance groups into AQIM and Al Shabaab, which now have formal ties with the core of Al Qaeda<sup>8</sup>. It was not until the United States was attacked on its soil that the U.S. government began to acknowledge the necessity of a unified military command in Africa. Proactively combatting terrorism was certainly not the only motive for the creation of AFRICOM. Assumed motives for this militarized turn toward Africa include having access to and controlling the continent's resources, most notably oil, and countering China's influence on the continent.

### **Unspoken Motives for the Establishment of AFRICOM—Oil and Natural Resources**

Historically, the United States' foreign policy towards Africa has been based on geo-strategic concerns with American interests at the forefront. The increased attention paid to Africa through the creation of AFRICOM and increased visits by American presidents in recent years may, on the surface, appear to be a genuine change in U.S. foreign policy towards Africa but the unexpressed reasons for this mounting interest and investment in Africa, explored below, continues to point to the United States placing its

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<sup>8</sup> Besteman, Catherine, et al. The Counter-Counterinsurgency Manual. (Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press, 2009), 124-26.

interests above all else. Continued access to and control over the world's oil reserves is one evident reason why the U.S. would move to strengthen a relationship with Africa. As political uncertainties surrounding America's unfettered access to oil from the Middle East mount, the interest in African oil has also increased. Orefo outlines four reasons why African oil is vital to the United States energy security. Firstly, America's domestic oil production has decreased though America's consumption of fossil fuels has increased resulting in an increased reliance on foreign oil. The U.S. has historically relied on foreign sources of oil, primarily from the Middle East. As violence and volatility in the Middle East has increased (due to the wars in Iraq and the Arab-Israeli conflict) it is risky for the U.S. to continue to depend on the region for such a critical commodity. Thus the second reason African oil is important to the U.S. is because it is a viable alternative to oil from the Middle East. Thirdly, the massive amount of economic growth in China over the last two decades has increased their consumption of the finite amount of global oil, making China a major consumer and importer of foreign oil. The U.S. must secure access to Africa's oil in order to ensure future economic growth at home and to counter China's dominance as a global power (more on U.S.-China competition in Africa below). The fourth reason African oil is important for the U.S. is that Africa's production of petroleum has increased as new oil wells are discovered. These discoveries and subsequent investments by multinational oil companies in Africa are creating a so-called "scramble for African oil"<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>9</sup> Orefo, "U.S. security interests", 94-95.

Olayiwola Abegunrin asserts that America's interest in Africa has always been based on the control of Africa's resources<sup>10</sup>. AFRICOM's mission statement may proclaim partnership and working together but history dictates that America's true interest in and strategy for Africa goes much deeper. Even before AFRICOM was finalized as a command, Abegunrin points out, the U.S. received approximately 12 percent of its oil from Nigeria. Nigeria is the third largest exporter of crude oil to the United States overtaking both Venezuela and Saudi Arabia as of 2007<sup>11</sup>. Nigeria and other oil-producing nations in the Gulf of Guinea are geographically closer to the U.S. than the Middle East, making the transport of oil from West Africa more economical. The militarization of U.S. foreign policy towards Africa through AFRICOM is clearly due to more than American national security concerns of a mounting terrorist threat in Africa. Access to a reliable source of oil for the U.S. is also a matter of national security. Indeed, George Klay Kieh Jr. views the future protection of U.S. access to African oil as one of the dominant reasons for the establishment of AFRICOM, "preferably by enhancing the ability of African allies to guard these resources themselves on behalf of the U.S."<sup>12</sup>.

Oil is the most evident African resource over which the United States wants to increase control but there are several other natural resources that occur in abundance in Africa but are lacking in the rest of the globe. Uranium, a key ingredient of the atomic bomb, exists in only trace amounts in the U.S. Indeed, the uranium used in the bombs

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<sup>10</sup> Abegunrin, Olayiwola. "Africa Command Center (AFRICOM) and U.S. Foreign Policy of Militarization of Africa under the Obama Administration." In The United States' Foreign Policy in Africa in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, edited by Adebayo Oyeade, 77-97. (Durham: Carolina Academic Press, 2014), 90.

<sup>11</sup> Abegunrin, "Africa Command Center", 90-91.

<sup>12</sup> Kieh, George Klay Jr. "Rethinking U.S.-Africa security relations." In United States-Africa Security Relations, edited by Kelechi A. Kalu and George Klay Kieh Jr., 191-204. (New York: Routledge, 2014), 195.

dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki was sourced from the Democratic Republic of Congo, one of the few places on earth where the mineral is found<sup>13</sup>. The DRC is also home to 80% of the world's columbite-tantalite, or coltan for short, reserves<sup>14</sup>. This mineral is essential for the manufacture of now ubiquitous electronics in the West such as cellular telephones, laptop computers and pagers. Africa also has high amounts of gold, cobalt, iron ore, chrome and of course diamonds<sup>15</sup>. The history of the use of diamonds as currency to fuel conflicts and rebels in, most notably, West Africa demonstrates the importance of having control over not only diamonds but other precious minerals and resources in short supply elsewhere. As China continues to rise economically, the strain on access to these resources will grow.

### **Unspoken Motives for the Establishment of AFRICOM—Countering China**

China's rise as a global power, and in turn as a threat to the United States, is well known and acknowledged in many places, African notwithstanding. After decades of failed development promises and initiatives from the West, China has emerged as an outside source of development in Africa offering a new and different method of development for the continent, which appears to be working. Africa has been offered another choice. The West created "development" and until recently, the West has held the monopoly on how development was to be attained. As China has risen as a global power, so has its influence on development. The so-called "Beijing Consensus"<sup>16</sup> has

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<sup>13</sup> Abegunrin, "Africa Command Center", 86-87.

<sup>14</sup> Vesperini, Helen. "Congo's Coltan Rush." *BBC News*. 1 August 2001. <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/1468772.stm>> (24 July 2015).

<sup>15</sup> Abegunrin, "Africa Command Center", 87.

<sup>16</sup> This term was coined in 2004 by former Time magazine editor, Joshua Cooper Ramo, and has since been used in opposition to the Washington Consensus. Junbo, Jian. "The Myth of the 'China model' in

challenged the Washington Consensus (though the Chinese government contests the existence of a Chinese model for development). The Western model of development has exasperated global inequalities and only contributed to the development of the global North, despite promises of the opposite. AFRICOM's promises of partnership with African nations to increase stability and security on the continent are naturally met with skepticism especially given the history of Western "development" in Africa and the option of another path. In order to assess if AFRICOM was established to, among other reasons, counter Chinese influence in Africa it is useful to examine the development models and methods offered by both the West and China in Africa.

Today's usage of the term "development" began in between the World Wars when the development project was instituted as a means of maintaining First World access to natural resources while simultaneously providing a so-called example for the Third World to follow<sup>17</sup>. The global governance institutions that arose from the 1944 Bretton Woods Conference strategically implemented development with the dominance of the Global North over the Global South the goal<sup>18</sup>. It was becoming apparent that colonialism would not last for much longer, but the colonies were still needed to supply resources and raw materials. As the development project has morphed into the globalization project, the West has maintained its dominance by continually constructing the rules of the game. The Washington Consensus has been the development strategy imposed on countries wishing to borrow from the West however; as China rises in power economically its position to influence how development is implemented is also rising.

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Africa." Greater China. 14 September 2011. <<http://www.atimes.com/atimes/China/MI14Ad01.html>> (11 November 2011).

<sup>17</sup> McMichael, Philip. Development and Social Change: A Global Perspective. (Los Angeles: Pine Forge Press, 2008), 45.

<sup>18</sup> McMichael, Development 56.

In the last decade, China has surpassed the United States as Africa's largest trading partner<sup>19</sup>. As China's economic and political ties with the continent increase, so has the United States' criticism of their relationship. This criticism appears to be born out of the fear that China will conquer the United States as the global hegemon by securing limited natural resources and securing access to future markets in Africa<sup>20</sup>. The basis of this fear is not unfounded. The West's conditions for development are stringent and non-negotiable but, as will be demonstrated, China's foreign policy is centered on the principle of "non-interference in domestic affairs"<sup>21</sup>. China is in a position to step into the development arena not only because the West has failed to bring about any significant development (indeed it has worsened the situation in many cases) but also because China itself is still developing. China uses aid as a foreign policy tool and gives aid for the same reasons the U.S. does: "strategic diplomacy, commercial benefit, and as a reflection of society's ideologies and values"<sup>22</sup>. The main difference between Chinese and Western aid are the conditions, or lack thereof in China's case, that accompany the aid.

Before examining China's foreign policy towards development in Africa, the Chinese method or model of development must be examined. China has been labeled a "developmental state" but what exactly this model means in the case of China is still vague. Although it was coined by Chalmers Johnson to describe Japan's "miracle

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<sup>19</sup> Brautigam notes the official aid is considered a state secret in China and it is therefore difficult to calculate the exact amount that is awarded to Africa. Brautigam, Deborah. The Dragon's Gift: The Real Story of China in Africa. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 2.

<sup>20</sup> Lyman, Princeton and J. Stephen Morrison. "The Terrorist Threat in Africa." Foreign Affairs 83, no. 1 (2004): 75-86.

<sup>21</sup> Hanson, Stephanie. "China, Africa, and Oil." Council on Foreign Relations. 6 June 2008. <<http://www.cfr.org/china/china-africa-oil/p9557>> (13 October 2014).

<sup>22</sup> Brautigam, The Dragon's Gift 15.

economy”<sup>23</sup>, the developmental state model is most commonly associated with the four East Asian Tigers—South Korea, Singapore, Taiwan and Hong Kong. While each of the Tiger economies differed in their industrial sectors and specialization, they all experienced high amounts of economic growth in the 1980s for the same reason: a strong, central and effective state as the pivot of economic growth through central planning. Richard Stubbs outlines, “three key ingredients” of a developmental state: institutions that carry out a “planned strategy for capitalist economic growth”, the “relational aspects” of these institutions and the state and thirdly, the “ideational aspects” or conceptual aspects behind the promotion of development<sup>24</sup>. China fits into the category of a developmental state as it uses state policies to accelerate development. The central characteristic in China’s developmental state is its control over finances to produce growth.

The Chinese government has refuted the notion that there is “Chinese model” planned for implementation in Africa yet the label has already been applied to describe China’s involvement in the continent. China adheres to the “Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence” as a foundation of their foreign policy: “mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression, non-interference in each other’s internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, peaceful coexistence”<sup>25</sup>. The Chinese Policy towards Africa is founded on five, strikingly similar principals: “sincere friendship, treating each other equally, unity and cooperation, common development and looking into the

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<sup>23</sup> Johnson, Chalmers. MITI and the Japanese Miracle: The Growth of Industrial Policy, 1925-1975. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1982.

<sup>24</sup> Stubbs, Richard. “Whatever Happened to the East Asian Developmental State? The Unfolding Debate,” The Pacific Review 22, no. 1 (2009): 5-6

<sup>25</sup> Brautigam, The Dragon’s Gift 3.



future<sup>26</sup>.” China’s foreign policy in general, is centered on being mutually beneficial to both parties. As a developing country itself, China cannot afford to be completely altruistic even in the case of extremely poor African countries. Instead it focuses on win-win economic policies that will increase the economic standing of each location. Development is not a zero-sum game for China.

China’s history of giving aid is not a long one, but its unique position as a developing country and the fact that it is still a recipient of aid has affected its current policies. China began awarding aid in the 1950s but it did not have a governmental aid agency in place. When the Chinese government did create specific institutions dedicated to aid, foreign trade and foreign economic relations were separate. It was not until 1982 that two were merged into the Ministry of Foreign Economic Relations and Trade<sup>27</sup> signifying China’s desire to merge international aid and trade. Although this ministry has changes names over the last three decades (it is now simply called the Ministry of Commerce), international aid continues to be linked with trade. The Ministry of Commerce is now just one of the three institutions involved in aid.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, another institution involved in aid, is the institution concerned with China’s political interest in foreign economic relations. Diplomats and other government representatives make up this agency. While the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is still officially responsible for signing off on annual aid plans, it has lost much of its clout as international commercial projects take precedent over diplomatic affairs<sup>28</sup>.

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<sup>26</sup> “China’s Africa Policy.” [China.org.cn](http://www.china.org.cn). 10 December 2003.

<<http://www.china.org.cn/english/features/China-Africa/82055.htm#>> (15 October 2014).

<sup>27</sup> Brautigam, *The Dragon’s Gift* 106.

<sup>28</sup> Brautigam, *The Dragon’s Gift* 110.

The third and most important aid institution is China's Export-Import Bank (Eximbank). Established in 1994, it is one of China's three policy banks but it is Eximbank's mandate that makes it so important in the development realm. The Eximbank's mandate follows the pattern of China's foreign policy of mutual benefit; the bank is expected to operate on a break-even basis. Its goal is not to make a profit but it also must operate without the implementation of regular subsidies from the Chinese government<sup>29</sup>. Eximbank is concerned with administering aid through trade, not simply giving out handouts. The year after it was created, Eximbank became the only Chinese bank to grant concessional foreign aid loans and by 2007 it was the "world's largest export credit agency", nearly doubling that of the United States<sup>30</sup>. The Chinese government has made it clear that these loans will not be cancelled or easily rescheduled; the interest rates and terms of each loan are firm.

Another institution involved in Chinese aid to Africa is the China Development Bank. Despite its name, the Development Bank does not give direct loans to Africa. Rather, it provides non-concessional development financing to government-owned companies, which in turn carry out infrastructure projects in Africa. The China Development Bank has also created the China-Africa Development fund to further introduce Chinese infrastructure projects in Africa<sup>31</sup>. It is also important to note that China rarely gives cash aid. Emergencies such as natural disasters or other instances that require a rapid response are the exceptions. Aid grants are typically given in the form of

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<sup>29</sup> Brautigam, The Dragon's Gift 111-112.

<sup>30</sup> Brautigam, The Dragon's Gift 113.

<sup>31</sup> Brautigam, The Dragon's Gift 116.

Chinese goods and/or services<sup>32</sup>. In the last ten year however, China has written-off more than US\$3 billion in African debt primarily to the highly indebted poor countries<sup>33</sup>.

These debt cancellations were non-conditional unlike the IMF's lengthy application and requirements for debt cancellation<sup>34</sup>.

Not only has China been investing in infrastructure in Africa (while the West has not) its aid does not come with conditions. The so-called "no-strings-attached approach" has of course been more popular with African leaders than the extreme conditions attached to loans made by the IMF and World Bank<sup>35</sup>. The terms on which China lends to Africa may be free of conditions, but that does not mean that there are no preconditions that investors look for when determining if a commercial project is viable. For example, in Zimbabwe, the China National Aero-Technology Import and Export Corporation agreed to a partnership with the Zimbabwe government however it required the Zimbabwe government to raise the tariffs on electricity first<sup>36</sup>. These preconditions are part of the negotiation process, just as any two partners would negotiate before undertaking a business venture together. The lack of conditions attached to Chinese aid is another reason for the global governance institutions to become fearful of their place in the development arena.

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<sup>32</sup> Brautigam, *The Dragon's Gift* 127.

<sup>33</sup> Moyo, Dambisa. *Dead Aid: Why aid is not working and how there is a better way for Africa*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2009), 104.

<sup>34</sup> IMF "IMF Factsheet: Debt Relief under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative" *International Monetary Fund*. 6 September 2011.

<<http://www.imf.org/external/np/exr/facts/hipc.htm>> (11 November 2011)

<sup>35</sup> Horta, Loro. "China in Africa: Soft Power, Hard Results." *Yale Global Online*. 13 November 2009.

<<http://yaleglobal.yale.edu/content/china%E2%80%99s-soft-power-africa-could-have-hard-results>> (15 October 2014).

<sup>36</sup> Brautigam, *The Dragon's Gift* 150.

It is China's "no-strings-attached policy" coupled with the policy of "non-interference" in a country's internal affairs that has received the most criticism from the West. The global governance institutions have expressed concerns that the social and environmental conditions attached to loans have to be reduced due to being undercut by Chinese loans<sup>37</sup>. Further criticism is raised regarding China's lack of concern for environmental and safety regulations in African infrastructure projects. But China itself is still a developing country and which does not have stringent safety laws so it is illogical that China is expected to create safety laws for projects in Africa. International observers accuse China's lack of conditions connected to aid as undermining local efforts to increase good governance in Africa<sup>38</sup>. This should not come as a surprise as these international observers are on the same team as the global governance institutions. China's choice of partner countries is also pointed to as cause for concern. While the West selectively imposes sanctions against authoritarian governments and dictators (Zimbabwe's Robert Mugabe for instance), China's policy of non-interference allows them to separate human rights violations from economic ties. But China is certainly not the first nation to do business with dictators. As Brautigam points out, Western banks such as Barclays, Standard Chartered and Anglo-American have maintained branches in Zimbabwe<sup>39</sup>. Additionally, western governments do not acknowledge their recent support of the apartheid government in South Africa and the Rhodesian regime among others.

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<sup>37</sup> Moyo, Dead Aid 107.

<sup>38</sup> Hanson, "China, Africa, and Oil".

<sup>39</sup> Brautigam, The Dragon's Gift 291.

China has continually provided support to African countries at times when the West ignored or strategically forgot about the continent. For instance, after the Cold War ended aid from the West was significantly lowered as the threat of the spread of communism was abolished while China's aid to the continent has only been increasing<sup>40</sup>. It has not waned since China began awarding foreign aid in the 1950s. Moyo points out that although China pursues economic policies in Africa that are beneficial to them, it is also improving the lives of the average African. More importantly, when surveyed, Africans expressed a more favorable view of China's relationship with the continent than that of the U.S. by almost two to one. Africans see Chinese companies and Chinese workers contributing to development in infrastructure while the West simply awards aid with stringent conditions.

China's relationship with Africa is clearly in contrast with the other dominant global power, the United States. China offers an alternative method of development to Africa. The U.S. is critical of the motivation and methods behind Chinese aid and economic ties to developing countries, but this is largely due to fear that China will take the place of the U.S. not only in terms of "development" but as the dominant global economic power. Kieh believes that through AFRICOM, DOD is strategically positioning itself to militarily confront China should it need to. As the "scramble" for Africa's oil and other resources increases so does the possibility that a conflict may ensue resulting a war between the two global powers<sup>41</sup>. AFRICOM is one part of America's larger strategy of combatting China both figuratively and physically should the need arise.

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<sup>40</sup> Horta, "China in Africa".

<sup>41</sup> Kieh, "Rethinking U.S.-Africa", 196.

The rise of China's involvement in Africa is most certainly an issue for AFRICOM, if not one of the reasons why it was created. As demonstrated above, China's model of development offers a new avenue to development in Africa while AFRICOM is increasingly treating Africa as a potential battlefield. Nick Turse describes it well: "For the Chinese, Africa is El Dorado, a land of opportunity for one million migrants. For America, it's a collection of 'ungoverned spaces,' 'austere locations,' and failing states increasingly dominated by local terror groups poised to become global threats, a danger zone to be militarily managed through special operations and proxy armies."<sup>42</sup> From this perspective, it is evident why Chinese investment is increasingly being welcomed in Africa while AFRICOM is being met with skepticism.

Raymond Gilpin views China's investments in Africa as potentially universally beneficial. The investments China has made in Africa's petroleum sector, for instance, will improve global access to oil and therefore benefit the world market. As more Chinese people migrate to and settle in Africa and as China continues to invest in infrastructure on the continent, China's contribution to security will also rise if for no other reason than to protect their investments. Gilpin acknowledges that China may also be viewed as a competitor for Africa's resources but that this does not mean China must be an adversary to the West. He foresees China as a potential partner for the U.S. and other western countries to work with for shared development goals<sup>43</sup>. In a perfect world, Gilpin's rosy projections for U.S.-Chinese cooperation and collaboration in Africa are a

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<sup>42</sup> Turse, Nick. Tomorrow's Battlefield: US Proxy Wars and Secret Ops in Africa (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2015), 125.

<sup>43</sup> Gilpin, Raymond. "China in Africa: An AFRICOM Issue?" In African Security and the African Command, edited by Terry F. Buss et al., 121-134. (Sterling: Kumarian Press, 2011), 128-130.

great idea but the reality of U.S.-Chinese relations is that they are competitors and control over African resources will prove to be the most contested matter.

Competition over natural resources aside, it has not been lost on China or the U.S. that Africa accounts for more than 25% of the vote in the United Nations General Assembly<sup>44</sup>, making the political support of the continent a valuable asset. The U.S. may be offering training and donating military equipment to Africa but money talks. China has not only overtaken the U.S. in terms of an economic relationship with Africa but trade between the U.S. and Africa has decreased. In 2002 trade between the U.S. was \$33 billion, six years later it rose to an all time high of \$142 billion but has declined to \$73 billion last year and is continuing to fall. China, on the other hand, has doubled its trade with Africa in four years to \$222 billion last year<sup>45</sup>. The Pentagon may not admit that AFRICOM was created with countering China in mind, but it is not entirely unlikely that this was the case. The predicted effects of AFRICOM will be examined in the next section, including the potential effects this unacknowledged competition may have on the continent.

### **Predicted Effects of AFRICOM**

AFRICOM will not have a net positive effect on the continent of Africa. DOD did not create a specific command and dedicate human and financial resources to AFRICOM out of altruism and the betterment of all humankind or even the betterment of Africans. AFRICOM was created with America's geopolitical agenda leading the way

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<sup>44</sup> Turse, "Tomorrow's Battlefield", 121.

<sup>45</sup> Baker, Peter. "Obama, on China's Turf, Presents U.S. as a Better Partner for Africa." *The New York Times*. 21 July 2015. <[http://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/30/world/africa/obama-on-chinas-turf-presents-us-as-a-better-partner-for-africa.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/30/world/africa/obama-on-chinas-turf-presents-us-as-a-better-partner-for-africa.html?_r=0)> (29 July 2015).

and has relied on the Neo-Orientalizing of Africa for its largely unchallenged acceptance. John Mukum Mbaku calls AFRICOM a modern version of a “colonially imposed military arrangement<sup>46</sup>”. He views AFRICOM’s promises of assisting African countries with improving domestic issues such as democracy-building, economic growth, health and educational opportunities to be no different from the colonial military arrangement of subduing African nations to minimize the costs of exploitation, minimize any potential threat to European hegemony by destroying any opposition and to, in general, put the desires of the colonial power before the colony. Mbaku points out that despite Europeans promoting their colonization of Africa as a method of “civilizing” the continent, Europeans never actually attempted to develop Africa, to enhance Africans ability to govern democratically or to resolve conflict peacefully. AFRICOM has adopted a different approach for “selling” the idea of AFRICOM to African elites than the colonizers but fundamentally AFRICOM is another foreign imposed military alliance. The Pentagon described AFRICOM as concerned with human security in order to assuage any potential scrutiny from activists against traditional military intervention. AFRICOM is not concerned with human security and it will not maximize African interests. The most telling sign that the Pentagon is only concerned about America’s objectives in Africa is the utter lack of effort on their part to consult any relevant Africans or African organizations with a vested interest (such as the African Union, Economic Community of West African States and Southern Africa Development Community) about AFRICOM. Although Mbaku is also concerned that AFRICOM will lose its significance once the threat of international terrorism against the U.S. is reduced, and AFRICOM will

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<sup>46</sup> Mbaku, John Mukum. “The Political Economy of U.S.-Africa security relations.” In United States-Africa Security Relations, edited by Kelechi A. Kalu and George Klay Kieh Jr., 119-146. New York: Routledge, 2014), 136.



be dissolved as a result<sup>47</sup>, in light of AFRICOM's likely undisclosed agendas (combatting China and competing for natural resources), it is unlikely that AFRICOM will dissolve should the threat of international terrorism ever lessen. Rather, it is more than likely that AFRICOM's agenda would be adapted to suit America's new threat perceptions and strategic goals. The most important question is why should Africa allow an outside force to determine their security interests? This relationship is clearly not a partnership but a paternalistic and asymmetrical relationship.

AFRICOM has taken up a "militarized peace-intervention agenda"<sup>48</sup>, according to Adam Branch, which will result in a degradation of peace, justice and democracy in Africa. Branch reminds his readers of the history of American foreign policy towards Africa as one of piecemeal approaches with "glaring discrepancies between rhetoric and practice"<sup>49</sup>. This lack of coherence has carried over into AFRICOM as the U.S. presence in Africa is no longer solely civilian government agencies but an increasingly militarized presence. This presence proclaims to be operating out of universal moral values of countering terrorism and therefore claims legitimacy beyond state sovereignty. Branch posits that AFRICOM is therefore immune from legal limitations because it is operating out of the discourse of the universal existential enemy<sup>50</sup>. The problem of course with universalisms is that they are created by the West and frequently used by the West to abolish a need for consent for such interventions. There is also the potential for AFRICOM to use this universalism further to its advantage by increasing DOD's presence on the continent. Branch is also concerned that AFRICOM will disavow any

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<sup>47</sup> Mbaku, "The political economy", 137.

<sup>48</sup> Branch, Adam. Displacing Human Rights (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 218.

<sup>49</sup> Branch, Displacing Human Rights 220.

<sup>50</sup> Branch, Displacing Human Rights 234.

responsibility, and is therefore immune from accountability, because it can attribute any failures to its African counterparts and such failures could potentially be used as proof that AFRICOM must expand in order to be successful<sup>51</sup>.

Ultimately, AFRICOM will not be successful in ridding Africa of the conditions that may foster terrorism unless it addresses the underlying issues that have led to this environment. Political instability in the form of civil wars and inter-ethnic conflicts have occurred since African nations were hastily granted independence. The violence and potential for future violence caused by this instability will continue until the system of government and governing is addressed. AFRICOM should focus on promoting democracy in Africa if preventing terrorism is the long-term goal. Individuals will continue to resort to violence if there are no other means for their voices to be heard. Until institutions are strengthened and the governments become accountable to their people, people will continue to pursue extra-legal ways of obtaining their goals. AFRICOM is a military entity. It is not capable of, nor does it intend to, reforming African governments and building/rebuilding institutions to improve the lives of all citizens. AFRICOM is only acting to strengthen African militaries. While this appears to be mutually beneficial, it must be remembered that African militaries have frequently been used as instruments of oppression and plunder against their own people. More efficient militaries without more efficient states may cause even further damage to the security of Africa and in turn the United States. By not addressing why Africa today is a potential breeding ground for terrorism and how it came to be so, the Pentagon is effectively negating any progress AFRICOM may make.

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<sup>51</sup> Branch, Displacing Human Rights 228.

## **Chapter Five: Conclusion**

Africa has never been at the forefront of America's foreign policy agenda. From a hands-off approach during the slave trade and Berlin Conference to policies of selective engagement and containing communism during the Cold War, the United States has historically made shortsighted policy decisions in Africa. Although the results of these policies have been mixed, in all instances, America's interests were of primary concern. Africa was largely treated as a foreign policy *afterthought*. The United States did not have a reason to alter their ad-hoc foreign policies in Africa until the attacks of September 11, 2001. The large amount of "ungovernable spaces" in Africa led George W. Bush's administration to conclude that the continent was a breeding ground for terrorism. The creation of AFRICOM signaled a long-awaited change in U.S. foreign policy towards the continent and created the hope that the U.S. would, at last, acknowledge their African counterparts as fellow leaders in the international arena. Indeed, AFRICOM's literature and publications regarding the command lead one to draw the conclusion that AFRICOM is a partnership command in which DOD, African military officers and African heads of state all come together to promote shared goals. The reality, as I have demonstrated in this study, has been much different.

Instead of AFRICOM being a command that acts out of both American and African interests, as AFRICOM Public Affairs office professes it is, AFRICOM is yet another example of the United States acting out of its self-interest. The command's authority and DOD's ability to dictate programs, missions, and trainings on the continent has been largely accepted by U.S. foreign policy makers because it is built on a new iteration of Edward Said's Orientalism. It is through this Neo-Orientalism that America

has given itself the permission to act as it sees fit in Africa and this assumed “natural” superiority on the part of America has been largely unquestioned by the international community. The U.S. military is inarguably the most powerful in the world. Indeed, since the conclusion of World War II, America’s ability to project power on behalf of its own interests and in defense of its allies has been the bedrock of international order. Yet AFRICOM goes to painstaking efforts to publicize the “joint” nature of the command with Africa all the while maintaining absolute, global military dominance. The United States, and the West in general, has an assumed superiority over the rest of the world. The countries that are “on top” must, by nature, be superior to all others. Neo-Orientalism is an unacknowledged and, for the most part, unrecognized mindset of this natural superiority on the part of the United States and it is manifested through DOD in AFRICOM. But the United States is aware that attributing superiority to oneself based on culture, political system, national history, race and religion is no longer politically correct. It is for this reason that DOD proclaims a partnership with Africa in AFRICOM, while simultaneously acting the opposite, and it is through Neo-Orientalism that their motives, missions and programs in Africa have gone largely unchecked.

In Said’s description of Orientalism, he demonstrates that the overarching characteristics of all Orientals were the same: a primitive and backward individual who was naturally inferior to their Western counterpart. Orientalism was powerful because it *normalized* generalizations of entire civilizations. AFRICOM has operated through the same generalizations as the lack of individuals mentioned or quoted in AFRICOM’s publications has demonstrated. Additionally, the lack of consultation with African leaders and elites when AFRICOM was being founded speaks volumes. Being an

African is more important than any other defining factor; just as was true in Said's Orientalism, being from the Orient overrode all other characteristics including being human. The African continent is a place frozen in time and the persistent, dominant narrative is that of a continent that is unable to take care of itself. Africa is a collection of stereotypes that remain static. They may be reconstituted and repackaged over time but the general characteristics are the same. Despite the rhetoric declaring otherwise, the West views itself as selfless and altruistic, coming to Africa's rescue because the continent cannot help itself. The West must intervene because the continent will not change on its own. Through America's self-appointed role as the global policeman, AFRICOM is not only a military *duty* for the United States but an act of *morality*. It is coming to the rescue of an otherwise hopeless place and forcing its method of militarization on the continent in order to save the continent from itself, as well as the world from potential, future terrorism.

However, AFRICOM is not what Africa needs in order to develop and it is not a valid method of combatting terrorism. Africa needs economic development, increased security and most of all political stability. America, and the rest of the Western world, could help Africa to a greater extent by increasing foreign direct investment, promoting democracy, creating fair trade agreements, granting increased debt relief and promoting African goods access to American, and other Western, markets. Instead, AFRICOM is looking for a shortcut to combat potential terrorism, rather than address the root causes (large number of unemployed youth, poverty, lack of jobs or a future career, lack of educational opportunities, corruption) of what creates the environment for terrorism to take hold. By contrast, AFRICOM's focus on training African forces to carry out

America's agenda significantly deviates from this task. The unspoken motives for the establishment of AFRICOM may elucidate why AFRICOM has done so little to mitigate the underlying circumstances that lead to terrorism. Control over the finite amount of natural resources, most notably oil, essential to American industry is one valid reason for America's turn towards Africa. Countering China's increasing influence in Africa, especially China's radically different approach to development, is another plausible reason for the creation of AFRICOM.

Said's goal, in authoring Orientalism, was to describe Orientalism as a particular system of ideas. He did not advocate for, nor did he offer any solutions towards, replacing this system with a new one. Yet, at the same time, the binary global division of "us" versus "them" is inescapable. This division cannot be ignored nor can it simply be "worked around". Similarly, this work aimed to draw attention to DOD as a Neo-Orientalizing force in Africa, not to promote an overthrow of this system or to suggest a replacement but to start a conversation or perhaps to continue with the conversation Said started.

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